

THE PREFERENCES OF Y-GENERATION STUDENTS ON THE WORKPLACE

by

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence of the Y-generation students' preferences on office layout and how important the workplace is in attracting, recruiting and retaining Generation Y workers. The objectives of this study revolves around Generation Y's preferences about their future workplace, what workspace design and technology they would like in the office, their travel preferences to work, how the workplace can contribute towards job satisfaction and other facilities they prefer to have access to on site. The research sample consisted of 334 students from the University of Pretoria. These participants were approached on a convenience basis as well as advertised via social networks to complete the survey online. A multi-dimensional data analysis to enable an accurate assessment of the specific objectives guided the study. This study enables a better understanding of Generation Y and what their workplace preferences entail. Businesses can gain an understanding of how they can use their real estate and facilities as strategic assets to attract and retain the Y-Generation talent pool. Social, demographic and economic changes are causing a severe skills shortage. People are attracted to workplaces where values are clearly communicated. Generation Y in particular is ready to engage with companies that provide the environments in which they will thrive. Workplace design is likely to become a strategic weapon in the battle to attract and retain scarce young talent in today's increasingly competitive global economy. The results have shown that employers should keep up to the rapid technological growth and not fall behind. Companies should transform workplaces which allow for individual work, collaborative tasks and provide an environmentally green workplace – not only into its design, but also in the way employees work.

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Declaration of original authorship

I, **Jacoba Susanna Kruger**, declare that **“*The preferences of Y-generation students on the workplace*”** is my own work. All the resources I used for this study are sited and referred to in the reference list by means of a comprehensive referring system. I declare that the content of this thesis/article has never before been used for any qualification at any tertiary institute.

Jacoba Susanna Kruger

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a generational tidal wave coming that is threatening to shake up workplaces throughout the world. A new group is leaving university and joining the workplace in growing numbers. They are referred to as Generation Y, children of the vast Baby Boomers. Born between 1980 and 1999, the Millennials, as they are also known, are nearly as large a cohort as the Baby Boomers. As they take their places in the cubicles next door to their predecessors, a pronounced culture clash is foreseeable (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Oxygenz is the latest research project launched by Johnson Controls Global Workplace Solutions to understand the preferences of Generation Y for their future workplace. Students and young workers, aged between 18 and 25 years old, can be part of a global survey to create a profile of their ideal workplace which they can share with friends and other survey respondents around the world. Oxygenz has been designed and developed by Johnson Controls R&D Programme Global Workplace Innovation in partnership with Haworth Ideation Group (Puybaraud, 2009).

In this paper, the researcher will provide background regarding this phenomenon and why this is such an important topic to investigate. In addition, a thorough review will be given on previous literature regarding this topic. Most important, the research methods and designs will be discussed on how the sampling will be done and how data will be collected. Finally, the process for data analysis will be discussed and the ethical considerations regarding this study. The results of the survey will be presented at the end of the paper, and recommendations will be given on how to manage this phenomenon at the workplace.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Generation Y and the workplace is a research project that seeks to understand the importance new university graduates attach to their future workplace. The University of Pretoria partnered with Johnson Control in its global research project, Oxygenz. The research – conducted by Johnson Controls Global Workplace Solutions – looks at what Generation Y wants, needs and prefers in the workplace and will provide important guidelines for local organisations hoping to attract and retain what has been dubbed the “transformational” generation. Generation Y is the largest generation to hit the global markets since the Baby Boomers. In South Africa it accounts for nearly a quarter of the population (Puybaraud, 2009).

The Oxygenz survey, developed in partnership with Haworth, a global leader in the design and manufacture of adaptable workspaces, and iDEA, a specialist design studio offering expertise in workplace, communication and strategic sustainability was initiated in February 2008. Oxygenz Generation Y respondents - born between 1981 and 1990 – have come from universities in the United Kingdom, United States, China, Germany and recently to South Africa. The University of Pretoria is the first South African university to take part in this initiative (Puybaraud, 2009).

Dr Marie Puybaraud (2009), Director of Global Workplace Innovation at Johnson Controls and leading the research, says: “The results of the survey will provide important insight into the workplace preferences of Generation Y. This will assist organisations to prepare their workplaces to attract Generation Y and, ultimately, support their long-term business success.”

For South Africa, this information is increasingly vital given the country’s growing skills shortage and the high numbers of people – highly experienced experts as well as the freshly graduated – who are emigrating to take up attractive job offers elsewhere (Humble, 2007).

Each of the partnering universities participating in the global survey has committed to gathering responses from 500-1000 Generation Y respondents. The first global report on

Oxygenz was published in October 2009 and surveys 5,000 Generation Y from around the globe. This study will only focus on South Africa, in particular the University of Pretoria.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

How important is the workplace in attracting, recruiting and retaining Generation Y workers and what factors contribute to talent management between different genders?

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence of the Y-generation on office layout.

The following specific objectives will guide the study:

- What are Generation Y's preferences about their future workplace?
- What workspace design will they prefer?
- What technologies will they want to use?
- How will they prefer to get to and from work?
- What other facilities will they prefer to have on site?
- How important is having a choice of when and where to work?
- How will the workplace contribute to their job satisfaction?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This global research project – OXYGENZ – will make a significant contribution to companies' knowledge of how they might use their real estate and facilities as strategic assets to attract and retain scarce talent. By partnering with forward thinking corporations and selected academic institutions globally, the international research team aims to engage young workers/students to participate in the online survey (at www.oxygenz.com) to understand how important the workplace is in attracting, recruiting and retaining Generation Y employees.

The research team will gather and share new knowledge about how businesses might use their real estate and facilities as strategic assets to attract and retain this talent pool. Demographic, social and economic changes are causing a severe lack of skills amongst the workforce. People are attracted to workplaces where values are clearly communicated, whereas Generation Y in particular is ready to engage with companies that

provide the environments in which they will prosper. These environments will include the physical workspace and office location. Workplace design is likely to become a strategic advantage in the fight to attract and retain scarce talent in today's increasingly competitive working environment. To this date, no empirical research has been conducted regarding this study and this will be seen in the chapter concerning previous literature done.

1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 will cover the background, scope and objectives that lead to the purpose of this study.

Chapter 2 will discuss the core concepts regarding this study as they were reviewed in previous literature.

Chapter 3 will describe the method of investigation that has been applied in this study. This includes how the sample was chosen to collect data, and in addition how this data was collected. Thereafter, the data analysis will be discussed.

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the results found in the study. Graphs will be utilised to illustrate the relative findings where applicable.

In the final chapter the results will be analysed and reported, and recommendations will be made regarding this study.

1.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the background of the research was given. The related research problem, objectives and importance of this study was also clarified to gain an understanding of what the study entails and what significance it can provide for future employers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 a thorough literature review will be outlined. This literature survey is essential to convey what previous work has been undertaken regarding this study. Very little research has been done on Generation Y and their future workplace preferences. There is also no literature found on what their preferences are travelling to work. Literature has indicated that this generation is very technological orientated, but what technologies they prefer to be present in the workplace are not clear. Limited research has been conducted regarding the generation's workspace preferences and how they would like their office layout to be designed.

Firstly, a discussion will be given on who this Generation Y is, why they are so important and thereafter their needs regarding the workplace. An investigation will also be made into who this generation is and what constitutes their behaviour versus the behaviour of their Baby Boomer parents and superiors. Generation Y's work pattern preferences are discussed and it is very clear what they prefer. Strategies will also be made available on how this generation can be retained in the workplace according to previous research conducted.

2.2 WHO IS GENERATION Y?

Generation Y is the generation that was born between 1980 and 1999. This range of date may vary from source to source. On a worldwide basis, the use of the term Generation Y seems to be restricted to the Western world (Thihli & Hinai, nd). Also known as the "Echo Boomers," "Nexters," "Millennials," most companies are playing a losing hand when it comes to employing these young people. Sujansky and Ferri-Reed (2009) commented that, "unless something radically changes, companies will continue to lose billions of rands because they lack a process to attract, hire, and retain this dynamic new generation."

Generation Y is considered to be techno savvy, open-minded, never-heard-the-word-no-before kids (Bramley *et al.* nd). Humble (2007) states that Generation Y sees time as currency and want immediate incentives. This generation lives very much in the moment and for the most of them loyalty must be earned. Generation Y needs to be lead by example and if longevity is rewarded in a company that would be a good reason for them to stay (Humble, 2007).

A 23 year old consumer Christine Carter (2010) said, “We are racially and ethnically diverse; we tend to live with only one parent, who makes us more open-minded than our predecessors; traditional values and parental approval are very important and we believe sustaining the environment is a team effort and 91% of Generation Y supports companies that support good causes”. She also stated that Generation Y is the most technologically savvy generation yet, which include social media web sites such as Twitter, MySpace and Facebook that have been incorporated into their daily lifestyle. Online research, price comparison and social media marketing also play an important part in the purchasing decisions of this generation (Carter, 2010).

Experiences that occurred during the forming stages of childhood and teenage years also create and define differences between the generations (McCrindle, 2002). Generation Y have lived through the age of the Internet, globalisation and green politics. Shared experiences like those during one’s youth unite and shape a generation (McCrindle, 2002). According to Mark McCrindle (2002), there is an ancient saying that bears much truth: “People resemble their times more than they resemble their parents”.

“Unlike their parents and grandparents, this generation is not afraid to seek out new challenges, like job hopping every six to twelve months, and they prefer not to be led in command and control fashion but to participate in decision-making. In short, this is going to give rise to new values, behavioural norms and structures,” says Professor Karel Stanz, Head of Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria (Puybaraud, 2009).

An article on Generation Y by Promar International (2001) indicated that Generation Y has key characteristics like being hardworking, pragmatic, and great emphasis is placed on

independence and individuality. This generation is ethnically more diverse than the previous generations, therefore displaying a high degree of tolerance towards different cultures, behaviours and lifestyles. According to this article, Generation Y is comfortable operating in the world of fragmented media, particularly if it comes to the latest technology, and they are economically more optimistic than the previous generation.

Sally Kane (2010) defines some traits that are common to the Generation Y below:

- **Technological-Savvy:** Generation Y grew up with technology and rely on it to perform their jobs better. Equipped with BlackBerry cellular phones, personal laptops and other gadgets, Generation Y is connected 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This generation prefers to communicate through electronic mail and text messaging rather than face-to-face contact and prefers online technology to traditional lecture-based presentations.
- **Family-Orientated:** Generation Y is willing to trade high pay for fewer working hours, flexible schedules and a better work life balance. Generation Y have a different vision of workplace expectations and prioritise family over work.
- **Achievement-Orientated:** Spoiled by their parents who did not want to make the mistakes of the previous generations, this generation is confident, ambitious and achievement-oriented. Generation Y wants to be part of meaningful work and they have high expectations of their employers, seek out new challenges and are not afraid to question authority.
- **Team-Orientated:** In the years growing up, Generation Y participates in team sports and other group activities. They value teamwork and seek the input and recognition of others.
- **Attention-Craving:** Generation Y wants to be given feedback and guidance. They want to be kept in the loop and seek frequent reassurance and recognition. Generation Y wants to benefit from mentors who can help guide and develop their careers.

Generation Y is one of the most closely watched age groups because they are almost three times the size of Generation X. With both parents working and more mutual income than previous generations, Generation Y has often been branded as an “overindulged, spoiled, and disengaged group that looks at the world through prism of self interest”. Having grown up with the Internet, it is also the first generation that is completely

comfortable with technology. Marketers say, “Generation Y’ers lack attention spans and absorb information in very short chunks” (Kane, 2010).

2.3 GENERATION Y IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is a nation of over 49 million people of diverse origins, cultures, languages and beliefs. According to SouthAfrica.info, Africans are in the majority at just over 38 million, making up 79.6% of the total population. The white population is estimated at 4.3 million (9.1%), the coloured population at 4.2 million (8.9%) and the Indian/Asian population at just short of 1.2 million (2.5%). Nearly 31% of the population is aged younger than fifteen, with approximately 7.6% aged sixty years and older. Characteristics of the 2010 population:

- Population in 2010: 49.9 million
- 22.9% aged between 15 and 24 years old
- Growth rate from – 0.1 to 0.1 in 2025
- Increased life expectancy
- Reduction in births and total births per women.

With a large proportion of young people, South Africa median age is low at 24.7 years (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010) and a life expectancy of 52 years (United Nation Children Fund, 2007). Sixty one percent of the population live in an urban setting. The South African population is highly affected with health factors, with an estimation of 18.1 millions of adult HIV prevalence rate. As much as the power of a young population is strength, with major healthcare issues it could become a threat, slowing down the population growth, and in the long term creating a major generational gap (Puybaraud, 2010). Figure 1 indicates the South African Demographic numbers for both male and female.

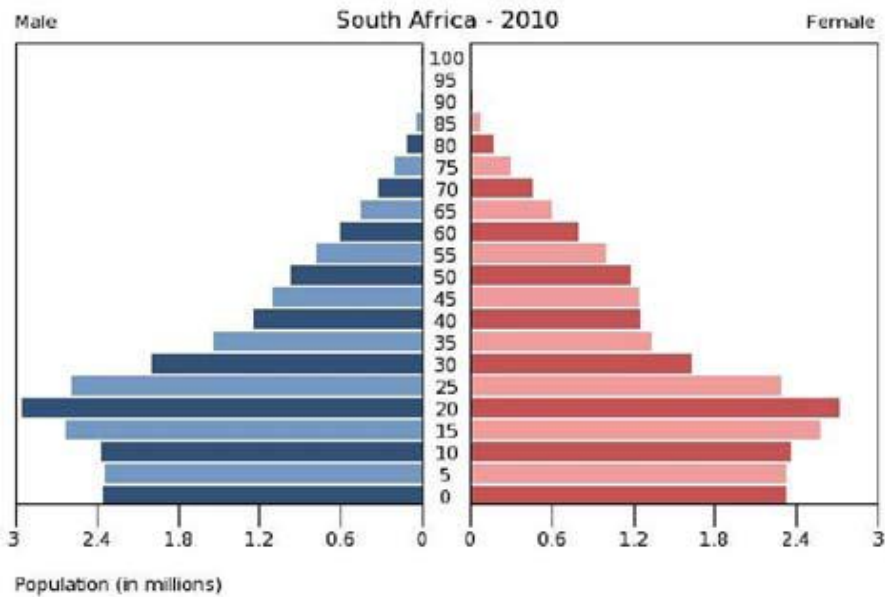


Figure 1: South African Demographic Pyramid, 2010

Source: Adapted from US Census Bureau (2010)

2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF GENERATION Y

Generation Y is invading the workplace around the world. It is a revolution with the potential to forever change the way most workplaces function. It also brings with it prospects for new conflicts, as the members of the one generation begin to work alongside the members of three older generations, for example, the Silent generation, the Baby Boomers and Generation X.

The Millennials, as they are also known, are well-educated, skilled in technology, and very self-confident. They bring with them to the workplace high accomplishments and even higher expectations (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). As Generation Y join the workforce, organisations are finding that their existing employees and managers are often perplexed and confused in trying to understand how the younger generation thinks and acts. Their behaviour, their clothes, and their attitudes are becoming subject to scrutiny as they clash with existing company cultures (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). This generation will bring a new style and a new perspective to the workplace, but unless organisations are ready to be pro-active to adapt, they risk losing billions to unwanted turnover and lost productivity.

According to Bizcommunity.com (2009), a daily media, marketing and advertising news website, this generation will have access to even more information than the previous generation. Generation Y will be wired to the 'hilt', capable of absorbing and processing information more quickly and efficiently than any generation before them. The Y-Generation will have the power to use this information to build or destroy brands by a "click of a button".

In South Africa, this generation accounts for more than a quarter of the population. According to Bizcommunity.com, "any marketer who is not speaking to this market today, and learning how best to cater to its needs tomorrow, is already dead in water". Generation Y's importance should not be underestimated; they will grow into an enormous market over the next twenty years, but it is already a force to be reckoned with. This generation has a greater impact on family spending than any generation before them.

In addition, investing in this generation reaps lifetime rewards if brand loyalty can be established at an early age. Generation Y in fact, does exhibit strong loyalty patterns, as long as you continue to deliver what you promise, when you promise it (bizcommunity.com, 2009).

Generation Y is moving into the workplace in big numbers, and the need to keep them there is even greater. The United States Bureau of Labour Statistics predicts a slowdown in the pace of labour-force growth and productivity in 2016, as some of the seventy million-plus Baby Boomers retire (Su, 2007). The escalating departure of the Baby Boomers from the workplace represents only one facet of the problem. Currently, in the United States alone, about forty million Generation Y youngsters make a living in corporations. Toossi (2008) predicted that by 2014, the numbers will climb to about fifty-eight million. Not only are they a growing force in the workplace to be reckoned with, but reducing their turnover is also sure to become a major focus in the years to come (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

In addition, the Baby Boomers are leaving the workplace that they have designed and transformed around them, which is now at odds with the work expectations of the Y-Generation who will take their place. Workplace cultures are derailed and creating

puzzlement and therefore faced with the need to adapt their cultures to the work styles of the Y-Generation (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Problems that companies are also facing is that the Y Generation is difficult to attract and once hired, do not stay around long. According to an OPEN Ages Survey (2007) from American Express, Generation Y is almost twice as likely as Baby Boomers small business owners to be or plan to be “serial entrepreneurs”, thus owning or planning on owning more than one business.

Support from this generation can be gained through speaking their language. In order to do that, people have to understand who they are, where they come from, and where they want to go.

In an article by Ryan Healy (2008), Generation Y is primed to change the workplace for the better. He identified ten ways Generation Y will change the workplace:

- They will only hold meetings that are productive and important. A good meeting will pull everyone to the same page while motivating them to get the work done. It is rare that meetings will take more than 30 minutes for them.
- They will shorten the work day, by balancing work and life.
- Administrative assistants will be brought back, this will save the company a ton of time according to them.
- Retirement will be redefined by this generation. They will figure out themselves how to save money.
- Real mentors will be found because this generation is obsessed with career development and therefore acknowledges the importance of great mentors.
- Respect will be restored to the Human Resource Department because in previous years they did not receive any respect. This department and the role it plays in a company is very important to this generation.
- Promotion will be based on emotional intelligence, because they believe that a good manager is not necessarily based on seniority. They believe a good manager is someone with good people skills.
- They will continually value what their parents have to offer and they will make them a part of their live until they are well above thirty years old.

- They enjoy higher starting salaries more than promises of promotions that may never come. Therefore, they are very idealistic towards life.
- The performance review will be reinvented because they believe that semi-annual and annual performance review does not work. This generation want constant feedback, because they do not want to wait a year before they hear how they are doing.

Shaikh (2009) has highlighted some changes that have taken place in the twenty first century workplace:

- Increase in virtual offices
- More flexible working hours
- Greater engagement across culture and different time zones
- Ambiguous work and social boundaries as a result of technological innovation and the ability to access information instantly
- Increased networking socially and professionally
- Flatter organisational structures
- Greater emphasis on environmental and social issues
- Rise of Eastern economies
- Engaging in meaningful relationships with clients.

According to Shaikh (2009), if the above-mentioned changes are managed well by today's leaders, it can prove to be a great asset in increasing business competitiveness. He added that the key is to focus more on the motivational aspirations of the different generations and identifying areas of potential friction, rather than trying to get different employees to adapt to the existing workplace practices.

A recent Deloitte and Touche (2007) survey indicated that Generation Y's search for meaning makes support for volunteering programs part of their benefits that they value the most. "More than half of the workers in their twenties prefer employment at companies that provide volunteer opportunities."

The first challenge for the companies that want to hire the best young workers is getting them in the door, said Trunk (2007). She stated that Generation Y is in high demand – the Baby Boomers are retiring and many Generation X workers are opting out of long hours.

Trunk (2007) also added that Generation Y has high expectations, even at entry level. He concluded by stating that “more than half of Generation Y’s new graduates move back to their parents’ homes after collecting their degrees, and that cushion of support gives them the time to pick the job they really want.” With all the options at Generation Y’s disposal, companies are forced to think more creatively about balancing work and life. “People would rather stay at one company and grow, but they don’t think they can do that,” said Trunk (2007). Old assumptions about what employees value in the workplace do not always apply to Generation Y. Friendship is such a strong motivator for the Y Generation workers that they will base their choice on those of their friends (Trunk, 2007).

2.5 BABY BOOMERS VERSUS GENERATION Y

The turnover amongst the Y-Generation is high for a number of reasons. This generation moves fast and wants to be challenged. When a job fails to demand their best for a long period of time, they become bored and they are gone. According to Sujansky and Ferri-Reed (2009), they are not loyal to their employers, as their Baby Boomer parents were. Generation Y is loyal to people, however, so manager and peer relationships are important.

The prospect of switching jobs is not at all threatening to the Y-Generation. Most of this generation expect to have an easy time-finding employment. According to an Australian study, 52.3 percent of Generation Y stated that it was currently “easy” or “very easy” to get a new job, compared to 43 percent of the Baby Boomers surveyed (McCrinkle, 2007).

Another challenge for the workplace employing Generation Y is addressing the need for work-life balance. Baby Boomers have historically been willing to work fifty, sixty, or seventy hours per week to get the job done, often to the disappointment of their friends and families. As time passed, job security dwindled and the apparent rewards for working those hours faded. Baby Boomers began to question their persistent dedication towards their work hours (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

In a KEY Group Survey done in 2006, 1727 responses from various generations, one in every five indicated that they were planning to leave their jobs due to work-life imbalance.

Work-life balance means just as much, if not more, to the Y-Generation than it did to their predecessors. To some Generation Y individuals it may even mean more than salary (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). The Author Morris Massey (1979) once said, “What you are is where you were when.” His popular video series portrayed the difference between generations by focusing on the significant emotional events that influenced different generations during their “coming of age years.”

The Baby Boomers grew up in an era of social revolution and widespread uncertainty. Communism indirectly fuelled various global conflicts like the Cold War (1947-1991), Korean War (1950-1953), Vietnam War (1963-1975) and the Border War (1975-1989). In addition, the peace movement, women’s liberation, apartheid and similar events defined that generation. They entered the workplace in massive numbers and felt propelled to establish their careers. Like the generation before the Baby Boomers, known as the Silent Generation, played by the rules (or for the most part of it). They married, started families, and worked their way up the social ladder. They entered the workplace secure in the belief that they could expect to enjoy a long, prosperous career, and then finally, a gracious retirement (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

In contrast, the Baby Boomers’ children grew up in a different era. The early 1980’s saw an explosion of technology that transformed the fabric of our global society (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). Computers went from being scarce in the workplace to being omnipresent both at home and at work. Cell phones, video games, television and the Internet changed the background of Generation Y’s childhood.

Difference between growing up in the 1950’s and 1980’s, it is inevitable that the Baby Boomers’ and Generation Y’s approach to work and life will differ. It is those differences that foreshadow conflict in the workplace in years to come. In addition, some of the conflict can also be found in the overlap of shared experiences of the Y-Generation and the Baby Boomers (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

The Y Generation has decided to embrace life through balancing their work and personal lives. This life plan includes none of the heavy devotion to work that their Baby Boomers parents have lived by. Therefore, they seek a multi-dimensional life by satisfying

themselves through their work and personal lives. Even though they are responsible and dedicated, they expect flexible working hours that will enable them to lead fulfilling lives. In addition, Generation Y also expects to proceed along their career paths more rapidly than their parents. This generation also want to be promoted now and not 5, 10, 15 years from now (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Baby Boomers' parents, the Silent Generation as they are known, have not been totally absent from the lives of their kids. On the contrary, they have made their parental presence felt through high levels of pampering, mentoring and nurturing. Thus, making them the best in whatever they thrive to be. Generation Y bought into this gospel of being the best and also relying heavily on their parents for help and guidance (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). Reflecting on this heavy reliance on parents, Professor Richard Mullendore of the University of Georgia has referred to the ever present cellular phones as "the world's longest umbilical cord." According to a study by Robert Half International and Yahoo (2007), one in every four Generation Y consults his or her parents before making an employment decision.

John Naisbitt (1982), the author of the best seller, *Mega Trends*, wrote that "whenever new technology is introduced into society, there must be a counterbalancing human response – that is, high touch - or the technology is rejected." The Y Generation is considered living embodiments of that observation. They are comfortable with technology and therefore set them apart from their Baby Boomers parents. Baby Boomers grew up with television as their source of information, audio tapes and board games as their entertainment. Generation Y, on the other hand, have grown up with the Internet, listening to MP3's, communicating through cellular phones and instant messaging (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). This orientation towards technology carries over to their job searching. They regard the Internet as their source of information to browse prospective employers and social networking sites where they reconnect with their peers, such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

The clash between the two philosophies is so visible these days. The Silent Generation and the Baby Boomers, who have been in leadership positions for the past several decades, have shaped the corporate landscape and the subsequent expectations of what

work ethic should be in companies today. However, Generation Y, the fastest growing segment of the workforce, is demanding that the corporate landscape change to reflect and mesh with their relationship to work and their values. The basic unspoken rules that have governed corporations for the past century are being challenged intensely.

As the leaders who developed and furthered the traditional rules that regulate companies for the past century prepare to leave the workforce and future leaders begin to take over, tension is becoming more intense and the traditional opponents are beginning to succumb to the pressure. Frustrations are mounting from both sides as supervisors and managers are losing good Generation Y employees because they do not adapt to the current company culture. Table 1 below, indicates the traditional work ethic that has governed the past generations, and the work ethics of Generation Y.

Table 1: Traditional work ethic vs. Gen Y work ethic

Traditional Work Ethic	Gen Y Work Ethic
Work comes first.	Life comes first.
Distinction between work and personal time.	No distinction between work and personal time = work/life integration.
Follow the rules no matter what.	Follow rules that work and make their own rules if they do not.
The boss deserves respect.	Equality and respect is given only when earned.
Seniority = promotion.	Talent = promotion.
9 to 5 with overtime expected.	No defined work clock.
Work is based on hours.	Once work is finished I can leave for the day, even if it is before 5 p.m.
Preference for face-to-face contact.	Preference for digital contact.
Dress the part at all times.	Dress the part when necessary.
Will change to meet the needs of the organisation.	Expect the organisation to change to meet their needs.

Source: Adapted from Lipkin and Perrymore (2009:129)

Companies that truly take an interest in their employees and whose leaders inspire and challenge them to succeed are all attributes that the Y-Generation aspires to be part of. They want to create ways to use their talents and skills and to be provided with the

resources, like the Internet and other related expertise. Companies that address these issues come out ahead in attracting Generation Y (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

2.6 GENERATION Y IN THE WORKPLACE

Staying competitive in today's marketplace means attracting Generation Y's top candidates, something that can be challenging to many organisations. The first step according to Portuesi (2009), requires that an employer gain greater understanding of Generation Y's expectations and a willingness to stray from the norms that have become commonplace in their organisation. Although there are many areas to consider when looking to attract Generation Y's top candidates, Portuesi (2009) suggests the following to consider:

- Flexibility in Generation Y's careers. They prefer to balance their work and life, therefore seeking variation in the workplace. "They want the freedom and flexibility of a virtual office, but they want rules and responsibilities to be spelled out explicitly" says Ron Alsop, author of "The Trophy Kids Grow up: How the Millennial Generation Is Shaking Up The Workplace". If an employer leaves no room for compromise, Generation Y has no problem packing up and reaching for a position that will fill their desire. Regardless, they are obsessed with productivity and have no problem working longer hours, as long as it fits into their schedule.
- More feedback to this generation. They demand additional attention and guidance from employers. Generation Y thrives when working in an environment where there is an open flow of communication. "Millennials have been given very high doses of feedback since age 4, and they need that feedback to know they are on the right track".
- Employers need to look beyond the traditional pay-cheque and truly show the Generation Y employees that their work makes a difference and why it adds value to the company. This can be done through growth and advancement by offering training and development programs for employees.

According to a recent IMPACT survey (2007) from Deloitte and Touche, result indicated a gap between what Generation Y wants and what businesses are offering. Individuals from Generation Y are charting their own course, they want to change the world and they think they can. According to Deloitte and Touche (2007), this generation is better educated,

more affluent and more ethnically diverse than the other generations. They define “office” as anywhere with Blackberry service and struggle to imagine a world where people or information cannot be reached in thirty seconds or less. This generation sees a job as more than a means to a pay-cheque; they care what the company stands for and expect corporate social engagement to form part of the employer’s DNA. This report also stated that Generation Y workers want to work for companies that allow them to incorporate community involvement into their professional development both for personal and professional reasons.

Firstly, this IMPACT survey determined that Generation Y is specifically interested in companies that offer skill based volunteerism, rather than donating money or coaching a team. Generation Y feels that they can have the largest impact through donation of knowledge and skills directly to the organisation’s management. According to Hochberg and Reynolds (In Deloitte and Touche, 2007), “Generation Y is looking for sophistication in their corporate volunteer programs. They want more than a flyer in the break room, they are used to doing things online and they expect events to be worthwhile. They want companies to prove that volunteering is an important part of the business, meaning paid time off, sabbaticals, and formalised policies. Many of the respondents even want companies to truly integrate volunteerism into their career development. Seventy percent of survey respondents agree that companies should use volunteering as a professional development tool, whereas 50% believe volunteering should be considered as part of performance review”. Hochberg (In Deloitte and Touche, 2007) also commented that “companies need to recognise that community involvement is a powerful proxy for helping Generation Y understand what their vision and values are. They will look at companies that are committed, engaged and doing meaningful things and they will believe that this is a place I want to work” (Deloitte and Touche, 2007).

According to Leah Reynolds (In Deloitte and Touche, 2007), “one of the most amazing things coming out of the IMPACT study was that organisations were not maximising the things they were already doing.” By packaging and communicating its existing programming in a meaningful way, Ms. Reynolds thinks companies can achieve big recruiting benefits without spending big dollars (Deloitte and Touche, 2007).

The article by Promar International (2001) stated that Generation Y is snacking machines, therefore suggesting that they have a taste for fast food. This may indicate that companies need to make preparation for snack facilities of some sort. The article also suggested that Generation Y's two main sources of purchasing information are networking and the Internet.

According to Humble (2007), the number one reason why Generation Y employees stay or leave a job is because of the boss. They want a boss who is close, caring and aware. In reality, "Generation Y wants what we all want in a workplace; they are just more determined to find the perfect workplace for them", says Laurie Humble (2007).

Generation Y is extremely aware of office politics and want opportunities to get associated with everyone in the company as a whole. This generation likes to have fun in and out of work. This generation is therefore very social and can never get enough knowledge or opportunities to learn from (Humble, 2007). In addition, this generation is clear and open about what training is necessary for them to advance in their careers.

Teresa Wu, a young inspiring employee who entered the professional workplace in 2008, brought a whole new set of rules to her employer's attention (Wu, 2008). According to an article by Wu (2008), Generation Y spends their days on the Internet. Unlike time spent front of the television, much of their time spent online enable them to learn valuable information and engage in meaningful conversation. As a result, Wu (2008) commented that they are continuously learning and acquiring new skills. In a time of low job security, Generation Y will rather take up multiple jobs or start their own businesses than taking the single corporate job path (Wu, 2008). According to Wu (2008), "a company is no longer just a place to toil away at a desk from nine to five – we are looking for a vibrant community in which our co-workers are our friends and our bosses are our mentors. We want a company that will provide structure without hovering over lunch breaks or dictating the way we get things done". In addition, Wu (2008) also added that they have been taught the importance of asking for exactly what they want and they are not afraid to raise difficult questions in the workplace. Especially now that the channels of communication are wide open, they have fewer reservations than ever about taking their ideas to top level management. Finally, Wu (2008:2) stated that, "as long as our careers provide both the

opportunities and rewards we thirst for, we will be more than willing to invest serious time and energy into our work. If the workplace gives us that, we will be star performers”.

The UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB) has released a study called the “Idiosyncratic Deals: Generation Y MBA students' workplace needs”, which showed that the entrance of Generation Y into the marketplace is shifting traditional employer-employee power relations (Ronnie & Russo, 2010). It sought to discover exactly what attracts Generation Y workers to a particular organisation and what their career and employment expectations are once they are there. According to Ronnie (2010), the research has shed light on how Generation Y could impact traditional Human Resource policies and practices. She added that “the MBA students surveyed in Russo's study represent the very best that Generation Y has to offer. They are young and techno-savvy, educated and informed, ambitious and determined to succeed. This research is therefore applicable to the pool of highly sought-after Generation Y workers - or as Russo calls them, 'Generation Y Knowledge Workers'.”

The study by Russo (2010) illustrates that these talented young employees have much to offer the modern workplace. Russo (2010) illustrated the work of generational expert Bruce Tulgan, who predicts that Generation Y will become “the most high-performing workforce in the history of the world. They walk in with more information in their heads, more information at their fingertips - and sure, they have high expectations, but they have the highest expectations first and foremost for themselves.” (Tulgan, in Russo 2010:1). Russo (2010) added that organisations who are willing to be flexible and innovative with their employment regulations will be front in line to take advantage of what Generation Y has to offer. “Flexibility, work-life balance, mobility, career developmental opportunities and giving back to society are themes pertinent to Generation Y's workplace needs.”

Sixty-three MBA students from GSB, diverse in terms of race and gender, responded to the survey by Gigliola Russo (2010). Sixty-two percent rated the opportunity to do work that is exciting as “very important” - the highest measurement. Areas that were highlighted as “very important” to the majority of those surveyed included having a chance to train and develop; alignment between jobs and talents; and the ethical verification of their employer. According to the survey, Generation Y respondents are not determined to skew working

conditions unfairly in their favour. Their demands will ultimately help them to be more productive and valuable employees, they believe. One student for example, responded in the survey saying: “When you choose an employer you need to base your choice on how long am I going to work there, what am I going to learn, how are they going to teach me, and what can I do for them?”

Russo (2010) argued that a compelling case has been made in the literature on Generation Y that these workers are simply a product of the world they have grown up in. There are more options available now than ever before in terms of what media is consumed, the products bought and the choices available. Therefore, these expectations are unsurprisingly extending to the workplace as well. "There is also more opportunity for these workers to negotiate the terms of their employment due to the global demand for knowledge workers and much-publicised skills shortages," added Ronnie (2010). In response to how organisations should react to these shifting expectations, Ronnie (2010) advised that those companies that are the most flexible would come out as winners. "A one-size-fits-all approach to attracting and retaining talent will not work for Generation Y. They have much to offer and recognising this fact - and rewarding it - is the first step to harnessing their massive potential," she commented.

2.7 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

According to a previous study done on the physical environment and site choice of South Africans, results indicated that physical environmental factors influence the distribution of humanity as they do that of other species. This human response is also mediated through technology and cognition. Therefore, these factors will have greater importance in marginal habitats, however, great the level of technology (Avery, 1995:344). The article by Avery (1995) highlighted the chronic shortage of water that is suffered in South Africa and is suggested that the circumstances surrounding initial occupation and subsequent abandonment of archaeological sites may well be especially instructive for understanding the role of environment in human decision-making.

2.8 RETENTION STRATEGIES OF EMPLOYEES IN SOUTH AFRICA

A recent survey done in South Africa reported that large companies regard remuneration as the primary retention strategy, but in reality this only represents an average of 25% of what employees perceive as important (De Lange in Beeld, 2010). According to Mr Pat Smythe, Chief Executive Officer of 21st Century Pay Solutions Group, employees that are of value to the organisation, want to actively participate and not just be “retained”. According to Smythe (De Lange, 2010), the successful retention of employees is related to their level of involvement in the organisation. Sandra Burmeister, Chief Executive of Landelahni Business Leaders, commented that there is not only one remedy that works for everyone. An analysis should be done to determine on which level of the organisation, and in which phase of the employee’s life it is important to retain that employee (De Lange, 2010). The different generations and career development phases should be kept in mind and different remuneration benefits should be provided. According to Smythe (Beeld, 2010), other remuneration benefits include the following:

- A shorter work week
- Flexible hours and mobile workspace
- Part-time work
- Extended leave
- Job sharing.

Lawrence Wordon, Director of the Kelly Group, said that it is a valuable strategy in any organisation to retain employees (De Lange, 2010). He also commented that it is difficult to recruit good employees and in addition even more difficult to replace them. When an organisation looks after its employees, the organisation will save time and money because no other employees will have to be recruited. Therefore, it is much more cost effective to invest into current employees rather than replacing them (De Lange, 2010). Wordon’s employers are getting more innovated by the day to make current employees feel that they are a valuable commodity to the company by taking more time to get to know each other on a personal basis. This means that annual interviews are done with staff, personal development plans are formulated, the attendance of career planning by employees are enforced, and training and development programs are provided (De Lange, 2010). An employer should understand what the employee perceive as important and what motivates

them. Motivated employees' work achieve better and the morale is higher (De Lange, 2010). According to De Lange (2010), salary is not the only retention strategy but rather the fact that employees want to be inspired by their work and work environment. They want to feel that they are given recognition for their hard work. Wordon (De Lange, 2010) commented that shareholding is an important motivation strategy, "it is part of the psychological contract between organisation and employee: An exquisite way to ensure that employees feel that they form part of the organisation".

Employees from 21st Century Pay Solutions, from different age groups completed a recent questionnaire on the most important, to least important benefits out of a list of six (De Lange, 2010). The results indicated the following:

- Eighteen to twenty nine years wants basic salary and pension benefits
- Thirty to forty four years wants good medical cover and pension benefits
- Forty five to fifty four years wants basic salary and shares
- Fifty five years and older wants good retirement benefits and variable payments.

Landelahni Business Leaders' important needs for entry-level employees for the first five years of their career want the following:

- Opportunity for growth and development
- Role expansion in the workplace
- International work opportunities
- Learning new skills and abilities.

Needs of employees on senior level at Landelahni indicated:

- To contribute on an organisational level to society
- Contribute to different directions
- Give back to the environment (De Lange, 2010).

The workplace of tomorrow requires a new mindset, attitude and approach in dealing with the many challenges which are likely to be presented by increase globalisation. "A 'one size' approach to managing Generation Y is also inappropriate; so is being focused on their wishes and whims. Instead, their needs can be accommodated by working with them to find out how best to engage their talents," said Shaikh (2009). According to Shaikh (2009), portraying Generation Y as a completely different "breed of whimsical" employees

who is content on fulfilling their own desires and agendas without too much regard for their employers, is not helpful. Shaikh (2009) commented that it is evident from previous literature that Generation Y's expectations and beliefs about the world of work include a greater need for workplace flexibility, and challenging and engaging work.

Unless companies find ways to attract this Generation more effectively and resolve their short job tenure, the turnover problem will continue to cost companies exceedingly. Turnover costs can easily range from fifty to one-hundred-and-fifty percent of an employee's salary (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009). In addition, cutting employee turnover can reduce these costs substantially. If a company employs twenty thousand and experiences an annual turnover of over ten percent, the annual cost of turnover is fifty million dollars. By reducing turnover by just three percent, the company can save fifteen million dollars annually (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

2.9 OXYGENZ SURVEY

Creator of the Oxygenz survey, Dr. Marie Puybaraud, Director of Global Workplace Innovation at Johnson Controls says, "This is fascinating research that pushes our boundaries of understanding when it comes to how young people view the workplace and the role it plays in their employment choices." By undertaking this survey globally, everyone gains a unique insight into the preferences of generation Y, how they differ across continents and how these perspectives change and develop over time," according to Puybaraud (2009).

The oxygen survey was initiated in February 2008. Respondents included individuals born between 1981 and 1990, and have come from universities all over the world including India, Germany, China and the United Kingdom. This survey is now also available online to students of the University of Pretoria. "Generation Y employees will no longer spend time with employers. They tend to stay one or two years before they move on to the next job. As South Africa is experiencing a brain drain it is important for South African companies to attract and keep their best employees", mentions Professor Karel Stanz (In Puybaraud, 2009).

Professor Karel Stanz also commented that very little research has been conducted in South Africa and therefore no clear view of the situation. He added that “this is an ‘always-on’ generation that is connected to the Internet and each other via an array of electronic and socially driven services; they are participative and co-operative and work best in teams; they are career-focused, ambitious and money hungry; and they are scarce”. Statistic indicates that 22.5% of the South African population is considered to be Generation Y, therefore between 18 and 25 years old.

According to an article by Sona Hathi (2008) on the oxygen survey, Generation Y’s responses from countries over the world include the following:

- The top three things Generation Y is looking for in their workplace are challenges, opportunities for learning and location.
- Over 90% want to personalise their desk, suggesting that they want more personality in their workplaces. This also implies a shift away from formal collective corporate culture, towards a culture where they can freely express their individuality.
- Sixty-seven percent of participants want their own desk.
- Ninety-six percent of this generation prefers their offices to be environmentally friendly.
- Ninety-nine percent prefer access to a broad range of onsite catering facilities.
- Eighty-three percent would like to have at least five-star reception service.
- Seventy-one percent would choose to work in an urban or slightly urban location.
- Thirty-seven percent want to go to work by car, 21% want to walk to work and 18% by public transport.
- Seventy-nine percent want to work in a mobile way.
- Nineteen percent of the respondents are expecting to have a conventional working pattern, while 56% would prefer to work flexible.
- Forty-one percent of respondents prefer access to a team space, while 32% prefer access to breakout spaces and 25% prefers formal meeting spaces.
- Majority of the participants preferred a modern workplace interior with a subtle, clinical and relaxing interior.

2.10 CONCLUSION

People aged between 18 and 25, who are also known as Generation Y, are the newest and youngest members of the work forces. All over the world Generation Y is making their presence felt, causing businesses to rethink their working practices and starting new waves of social and business transformation. They are a remarkable generation and to review, there are at least six reasons why employers need to understand them and how they relate to work:

- There are not enough of them coming into the workforce
- They are transformational
- They do things differently
- They are techno-savvy
- They are challenging
- They are diverse.

In conclusion, the Generation Y apparently believe they can achieve anything. They are strongly leadership focused, collaborative and seek meaning in work and opportunity to learn. Natives of the digital world, they are frequently portrayed as demanding, selfish, technology orientated and job-hoppers with little loyalty to their employers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 outlines the methods used to study this topic. Since the research question is aimed at understanding what factors contribute towards the Y-Generation student's preference of the workplace, the quantitative approach was adopted in this study to generate numerous responses. Self-administered questionnaires completed by numerous students at the University of Pretoria were conducted to collect data. Multi dimensional data analysis and t-tests was done to analyse and interpret the transcribed data. The appropriateness of these methods as well as their advantages and limitations for the current study is discussed in this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research design chosen for this study is quantitative with some qualitative elements. Quantitative research “provides a numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population”, whereas qualitative research is focused on “...understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns...” and focuses on the “...meanings and interpretations...” allocated to a specific phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The rationale for approaching the research from this perspective was that seeing that the core purpose of the study is exploratory and therefore investigators identify a sample and generalise it to a population. Therefore a quantitative approach would be the most appropriate. Quantitative research enables the researcher to gather a numeric data of how the Y-generation is influenced by their office layout and additionally how these factors contribute towards attracting, recruiting and retaining this generation. This information is increasingly vital, given the country's growing skills shortage and the high numbers of people – highly experienced experts as well as the freshly graduated – who are emigrating to take up attractive job offers elsewhere.

Quantitative research is used to better understand the phenomenon about which little is yet known. This type of approach enabled the researcher to gain perspective on the topic and more in-depth information (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b).

Quantitative research tends to collect data for the purpose to generalise from a sample to a population, so that inferences can be made about the office layout preferences of the Y-Generation (Creswell, 2009:146). This method of data collection is cost efficient and can be applied rapidly (Creswell, 2009:175). The objective was to gather survey data from students across a range of academic disciplines at the University of Pretoria to help the researcher understand which physical attributes of the workplace are valued by Generation Y students, and also from existing employees in order to run a cross generation comparative study.

The following are general descriptors that best describe this study:

- Survey research is empirical in nature and aims at collecting primary data that is numeric (Mouton, 2001:152).
- The aim of basic research is to collect new data that will be quantified in order to make inferences about the generation studied.
- Exploratory study aims to investigate the problems businesses have in attracting, recruiting and retaining generation Y employees. It also aims to identify the factors that contribute towards talent management per industry sector, country and region.
- Primary data refers to data that is collected specifically for a research project being undertaken (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). In this study, the researcher will collect empirical data to address the research questions.
- Quantitative data refers to numerical data whose values can be measured numerically (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). The data collection in this study is by means of a self-administered online survey, which will generate numerical data.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

Data for this study will be collected by means of a sample, as it is not possible to interview the entire population. Samples are representations of the population under study, drawn from the population in such a manner that it enables increased understanding of the wider population. Collecting data from fewer cases help the researcher to collect more detailed information (Saunders *et al.*, 2007:206).

In the following sections the target population, unit of analysis, sampling method and sampling size will be discussed.

3.3.1 Research participants

The target population of this study is students that are enrolled at the University of Pretoria, to help understand which physical attributes of the workplace are valued by the prospective Generation Y employees.

The objectives and outcomes that need to be researched are: to determine what generation Y's preferences are about their future workplace; what workspace design will they prefer and what technologies will they want to use; their preferences to travel to work and what other facilities will they prefer to have on site; the importance of sustainability initiatives in their choice of employer, and having a choice of when and where to work. Finally, how the workplace contribute to their job satisfaction.

The unit of analysis of a study refers to the entities about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions (Terre Blance & Durrheim, 2004). In this study the unit of analysis is the Generation Y students and graduated aged between 18-25 years, both male and female.

The sampling method that was used is a stratified purposive sampling. This means that the participants are pre-selected according to criteria relevant to the research conducted (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method, which means that the researcher makes decisions in selecting the sample or respondents are chosen based on their convenience and availability (Creswell, 2009:148).

Table 2: Stratified random sampling

Advantages	Disadvantages
The sample of each strata is controlled	Increased error if subgroups are selected and defined differently
Increased efficiency of statistics	Require the listing of the entire population
Provide data to represent and analyse subgroups	Expensive, especially if strata on population have to be created

Source: Adapted from Cooper and Schindler (2003:199)

In this research study, individuals aged between 18 and 25 years old were targeted according to the generation Y criteria. Respondents were approached on a convenience basis, in and around the University of Pretoria. They were asked to complete a self-administered online survey and the website where they could find the survey was advertised around campus. The researcher will be available to assist the respondents with survey completion if necessary.

Quantitative samples are large overall. As indicated in Table 3, a sample of 334 respondents was reached across multiple study groups and different genders from the University of Pretoria. The focus will only be on the age group of 18 to 25, since they are part of Generation Y. The sample consists of 117 male and 217 female respondents from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

Table 3: Sample statistics: Gender and age

Age Groups	12-17	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Total
Male	0	117	24	5	0	1	147
Female	1	217	22	13	0	2	255
Total	1	334	46	18	0	3	402

3.3.2 Research procedure

The quantitative strategy that is used to explore the phenomena was by means of a self-administered survey, as the aim of the study is to determine the influence of the Y-generation on office layout. For this reason this method of data collection is the most appropriate. The survey is available online at www.oxygenz.com, as this is more time efficient and cost effective to reach the targeted population. The survey also focuses on social, demographic and economic changes that are causing a severe skills shortage. A major survey will be conducted every two years to respond to trends and changes in demographics.

3.3.3 The measuring instrument

The questionnaire was based on an instrument designed by Johnsons and Johnsons International and administered in different countries.

The research method used to collect the numeric data is by means of a self-administered survey, which enabled the data collection of multiple students and to facilitate the establishment of multiple preferences of the phenomena. During self-administered surveys, the respondent reads and answers the same set of questions in a predetermined order without an interviewer being present (Saunders *et al.*, 2007:312). The reason for choosing a self-administered survey is because a survey is based on respondent's opinions and preferences, and will be the most advantageous approach to obtain the numeric data of the large sample. The questions are mostly close-ended with some open-ended responses. Saunders *et al.*, (2007:356) state that these questionnaires are completed by the respondents themselves without assistance from the researcher and they can be administered electronically via the Internet, posted to the respondents via email or handed to respondents for later collection. In terms of this study, the respondents can only administer the survey online. In table 4 the advantages and disadvantages of web-collection are presented by Cooper and Schindler (2003:340).

Table 4: The web (Internet) as a data collection tool

Advantages	Disadvantages
Short turn-around time for results are recorded immediately upon completion by respondent	Focussing on the correct sample may be costly and time consuming
Ability to use visual stimuli to create interest	Converting surveys to web formats require specific skill and recruiting. Such skill may be expensive
Respondents feel anonymous	Technology is not perfect and result in glitches not involved in other data collection techniques
Ability to attract respondents in vast geographical areas	Self-administered questionnaires are prone to low response rates and certain biases

Source: Adapted from Cooper and Schindler (2003:340)

Primary data was collected via electronic survey. This eliminates the need for data collectors, thereby decreasing researcher bias. Electronic data collection techniques require access to computers, email and the University's intranet - although this may be seen as specialised equipment; the majority of the target population have access to these required facilities, and they are available on the University's premises.

The respondents were gathered over a period of time via an advertising campaign, like Facebook and the University's intranet, and directly targeted the respondents within the specific age group of 18 and 25 years old.

A complex matrix of workplace related data will be collected:

- Travel
- Workplace
- Workspace
- Working patterns
- Communal facilities
- Environment and sustainability
- Facilities, support services and utilities
- Creativity and productivity

- Company choice

The Oxygenz interactive survey is a unique interactive platform which uses images and words to help the participants to answer their questions. The main survey has been designed using Flash to enable the user to interact and travel through the survey in more of an online gaming / learning style than that of a traditional tick box questionnaire. Whilst still maintaining a structured backend database to allow for dynamic online survey interrogation, the survey projects a light-hearted quirky style to encouraging users to engage with the project. As many from the target population are unfamiliar with workplace terminology and may have never experienced an office environment, much of the questioning has been formatted to illustrate the terminology used. The survey experience visually builds the users perfect office as they progress through the survey and at the end participants are presented with their office profile in a format they can share with friends on their own social network site. The office profile is outlines in three main categories. The first category is My Workspace, where participants' space preferences are pointed out, the pattern of work they prefer, and their individual and collective working space preferences. The second category is My Top 3, where participants' indicate what their working environment should be like, as well as what they are looking for in a company. In addition, this category also provides the respondents' answers regarding factors that contribute towards their productivity and creativity. The last category is My Travel to work, which indicates the respondents' preferences for travelling to work. The food and social facilities preferences are also mentioned on the profile. The profile is available online at www.oxygen.com. The online Oxygenz Dashboard has the ability to provide a quick snapshot of the answer for a given group, in a given country and to compare the data with the global sample.

Saunders *et al.* (2007:358) provides attributes of electronic data collection methods and these are tabulated in Table 5.

Table 5: Attributes of electronic data collection methods

Attributes	Electronic data collection
Population's characteristics for which method is	Computer-literate individuals who can be contacted

suitable	by email, internet or intranet
Confidence that right person has responded	High is using email
Likelihood of contamination of distortion of respondents' answers	Low
Size of sample	Large, can be geographical dispersed
Likely response rate	Variable – 30% reasonable within organisations via intranet
Feasible length of questionnaire	The fewer screens the better
Suitable types of questions	Closed questions but not too complex
Time taken to complete collection	2 – 6 weeks for distribution – dependent on the number of follow-ups
Main financial resource implications	Web page design – Although automated software available
Role of field worker	None
Data input	Usually automated

Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2007:358)

Invitational emails were sent to the respondents by means of the University's intranet. A period for the data collection was given until the beginning of August 2010. This study only focuses on the Y-Generation students of the University of Pretoria and their preferences towards office layout.

3.3.4 Statistical Analysis

Data analysis is a detailed exploration of the information supplied by participants in terms of their preferences and opinions, which enables division of the relevant gathered content into particular themes of significance (Creswell, 2009:184).

Oxygenz delivers a multi-dimensional data analysis to enable an accurate assessment of the results. The passive data collection will enable the researcher to explore in great detail the complexity of the workplace and provide rich recommendations per industry sector by:

- Analysing the profiles of respondents
- Analysing changes in their profiles and observing workspace dynamics.

The data is analysed according to different groups. These groups will consist out of;

- Gender
- Workspace: the physical environment in which we work
- Workspace: the individual space in which we work
- Ways of working: the way we arrange our working day
- What criteria contribute towards the participant's creativity
- What criteria contribute towards the participant's productivity
- Real estate and facilities management services: the level of support services in the working environment.

3.4 ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 Validity

The validity refers to the extent the survey measures what it is supposed to measure (Pietersen & Maree, 2007). Validation involves the precision of the investigation and continuously checking findings and theories. This means that the data collected as well as the management thereof is done effectively. No validity testing was done on the researcher's part, because the profiles of the participants will only be used and not inferential statistics. A pre-existing questionnaire was used that illustrated validity on previous findings that were done in other countries like China and Germany.

3.4.2 Reliability

The reliability refers to the extent that the survey would yield consistent findings, when applied to different participants and projects. The lack of standardisation of the survey may lead to reliabilities issues. The pre-existing questionnaire will be used for descriptive purposes and therefore a reliability study will not be conducted. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2007:231), "Descriptive statistics are concerned with the description and/or summary of data obtained for a group of individual units of analysis". By using descriptive methods we try to understand the way things are (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2007:23).

3.4.3 Bias and errors

Various bias issues may arise during the survey process, like rater bias and participant bias. Research in any form is open to a number of biases and errors but sampling error (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:181); biased wording (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:373) and non-response error are particular pertinent to survey research. Sampling error is caused when the method used to select participants results in some individuals having a higher chance of being selected than others. To overcome this sampling error, probability sampling can be used in the study. Cooper and Schindler (2003:183), define probability sampling as a “random sampling – a controlled procedure that assures that each population element is given a non-zero chance of being selected”. Probability sampling therefore aims to ensure that each individual within the target population have an equal chance of being included in the sampling. Cooper and Schindler (2003:372) also discuss biased wording as a factor that can cause error in terms of the quality of data. The authors state that the use of visual aids will serve to point the participants in a certain way when answering a question.

3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

3.5.1 General ethical issues

A number of ethical issues arise during different stages of the research study. In this section these ethical issues will be discussed as referred by Saunders *et al.* (2007:163-194).

- Privacy of participants.
- Voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw partially or completely during the process.
- Objectivity of the researcher.
- Maintenance of the confidentiality of data provided by individuals and their anonymity.
- Consent and possible deception of participants.
- Minimise stress, embarrassment, discomfort and pain.

Saunders *et al.* (2007:178) responds to the issues of gaining access to participants in terms of permission from the organisation to be studied, relationship with the gatekeeper

and pressure to participate on an individual level. In terms of this study, permission has been obtained from the University of Pretoria to use the students as participants as well as to use the intranet as a vehicle for collecting data (please refer to Appendix B for letter of approval). The supervisor of the study has an established relationship with Johnson Control and therefore has full access to respondents and resources needed for this study. No pressure or obligation will be put on the individuals to participate.

The online survey facility to be used in this study will allow respondent to quit the survey at any time and allow them to either complete at a later stage or discontinue response entirely. Since the questionnaire will be administered by the respondents themselves, the researcher will be unable to influence respondents in terms of participation or responses. Anonymity will be assured on the website in the disclaimer.

Ethical consideration in terms of reporting the data encompasses when analysing data and confidentiality (Saunders *et al.*, 2007:192). Complete responses are used when analysing the data in order to ensure an honest representation of data received. The ethical clearance regarding the study is approved by the University (Appendix B). No reference will be made to the respondents when reporting the findings. The use of the University's name in terms of the final document will be done according to permission granted by the University of Pretoria (Appendix A).

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research methodology utilised in this study was discussed. It was highlighted that the research in this study was conducted by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The sample of this study consisted out of students that are enrolled at the University of Pretoria and age between 18 and 26. The sampling method used is stratified purposive sampling. In the final section of the study, ethical considerations will be under discussion regarding this study and how it may influence the execution of the study. The actual results of the study is presented in chapter 4 and thereafter, discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter presents the results of the survey completed by students from the University of Pretoria. The results are presented in different charts. These charts are categorised according to the participants' travel preferences, workplace and workspace preferences, working patterns, communal facilities, environmental awareness of the participant, company choice, creativity and productivity.

4.2 SAMPLE STATISTICS

From table 5, it is clear that 334 respondents from the University participated in this survey, whereas 117 are male and 217 are female. They are aged between 18 and 25. A total number of participants in South Africa are 402, where they are distributed over various different age categories. This study will, however, just focus on the age category of 18 to 25 years old.

Table 6: Sample Statistics

Age Groups	12-17	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Total
Male	0	117	24	5	0	1	147
Female	1	217	22	13	0	2	255
Total	1	334	46	18	0	3	402

4.3 TRAVEL PREFERENCES

The travel preferences of the survey included the respondents' choice of how they would like to travel to work, their car priority preferences, and what type of car they would prefer. The participants had the options of choosing to walk to work, ride bicycle or motorbike, make use of public transport, or by means of a car. If participants chose to make use of a

car, they had the option of choosing between a hybrid, a large vehicle, a town car or a family car. The different car choices range between low and high carbon dioxide emissions.

The participants can choose between various car features that they can prioritise according to their preferences. These car priorities include, the design of the vehicle, the technology the car has to offer, the safety of the vehicle, how environmentally friendly the car is with carbon dioxide emissions.

4.3.1 Travel to work preferences

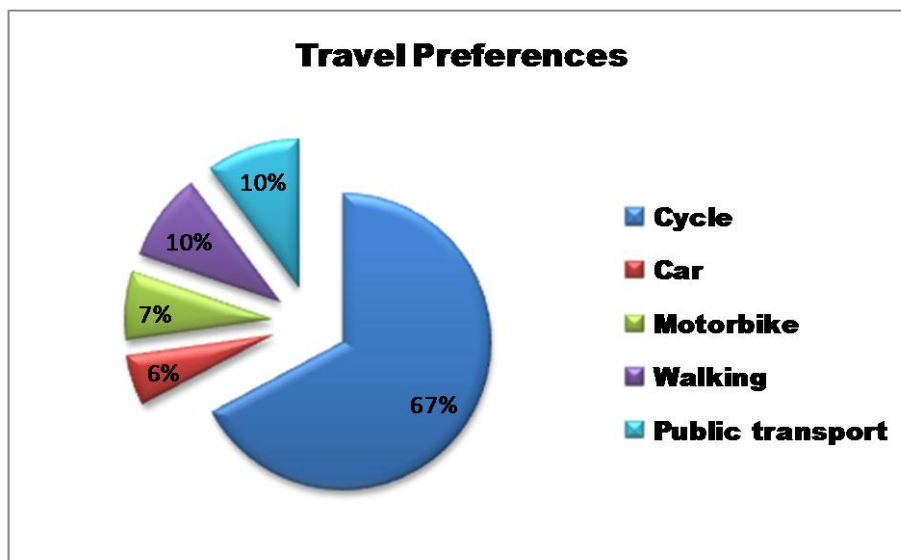


Figure 2: Means of travel to work preferences

Figure 2 above, indicates the following results for the respondents' travel preferences:

- 6% prefer to ride bicycle to work
- 7% prefer to ride motorbike or scooter
- 10% would like to make use of public transport
- 10% would like to walk to their work
- 67% prefer to ride car to the workplace.

4.3.2 Car preferences

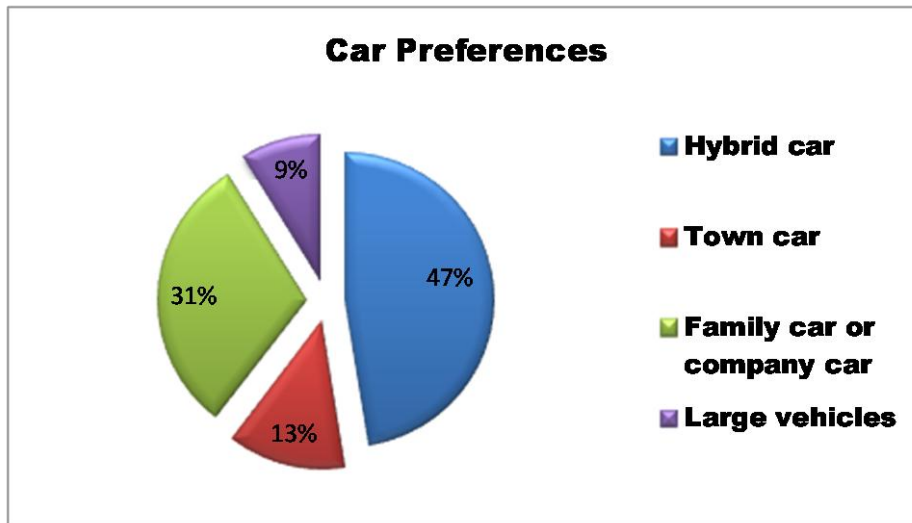


Figure 3: Type of car preferences

Figure 3 indicates the following results for the respondents' car preferences when travelling to work:

- 9% prefer a large vehicle
- 13% prefer a town car
- 31% would like to have family or company car
- 47% prefer a hybrid car.

4.3.3 Car priorities

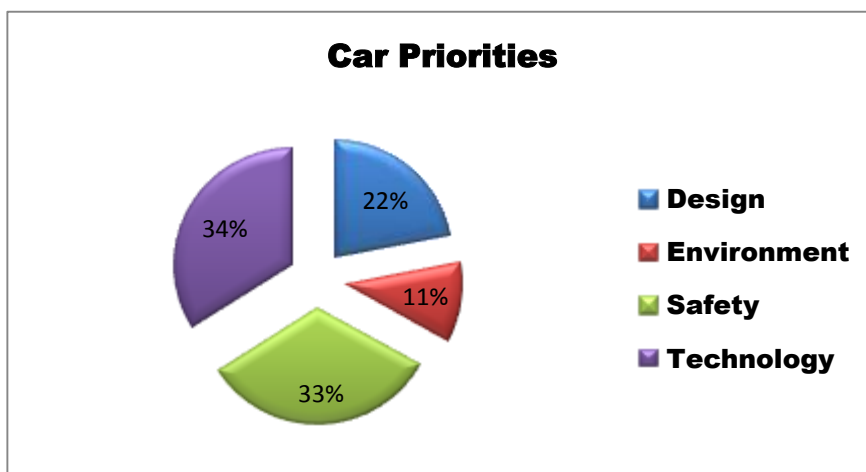


Figure 4: Car priorities

Figure 4, points out the respondents' preferences of what car features they regard as important when choosing their vehicle:

- 11% choose the environment as one of their car priorities
- 22% prioritize the design of the car as one of their priorities
- 33% prefer safety in their car choice
- 34% prefer a car with technology.

4.4 WORKPLACE PREFERENCES

In this category, the respondents choose where their offices would like to be located, their preferences of how they like their office to be designed, and the atmosphere within the office. Respondents comment on whether they would like to personalise their desk with decorations, photos or flowers. Lastly, the technology they prefer to utilize and have within the office.

4.4.1 Workplace location

The following graph is an indication of the preferences of where the respondents want their workplace to be located.

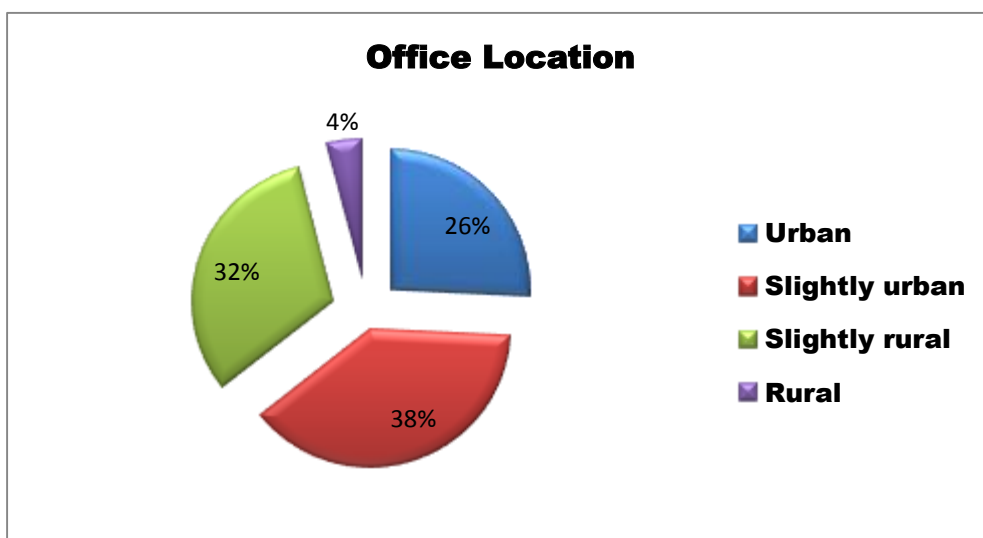


Figure 5: Office location preferences

Figure 5 illustrates the office location preferences of the Y-Generation respondents as the following:

- 4% prefer an office in a rural location
- 26% prefer an urban location
- 32% would like to work in a slightly rural location
- 38% prefer to work in a slightly urban location.

The next figure reveals the office location preferences of both male and female. This gives an idea of what the different genders prefer regarding their office environment. Figure 6 contributes towards the employer’s understanding of what environment attracts different gender groups, and in the end will result in retaining that employee.

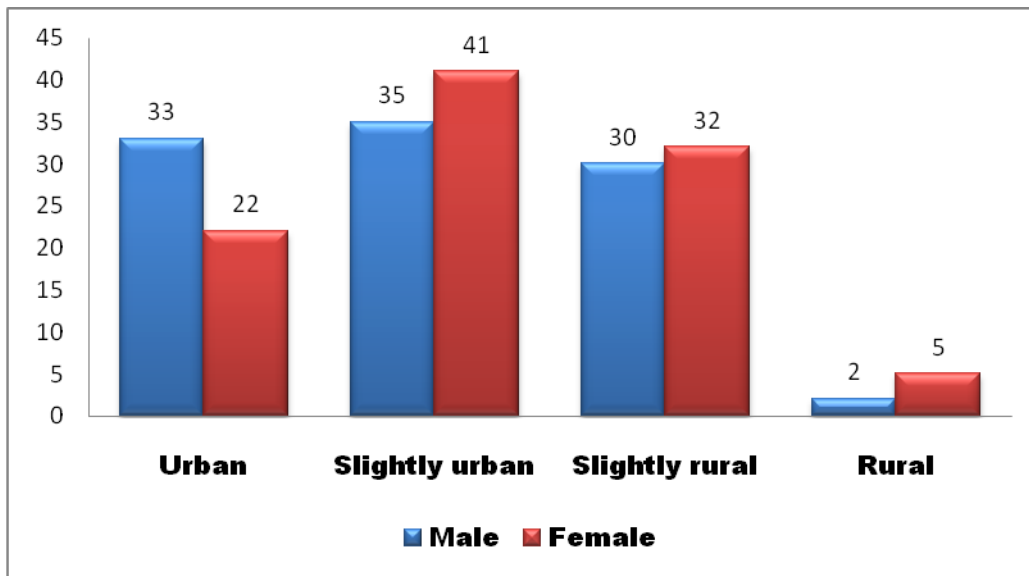


Figure 6: Male and female office location preferences

As shown in Figure 6 above, it is clear that high percentage female respondents (41%) prefer to work in a slightly urban location as opposed to 35% of male. Both slightly rural (30%) and urban (33%) locations are of interest to the male respondents, as these results indicate to be somewhat close. The majority of female respondents prefer slightly urban (41%) and slightly rural (32%) locations to a more urban (22%) and rural (5%) environment.

4.4.2 Workplace atmosphere

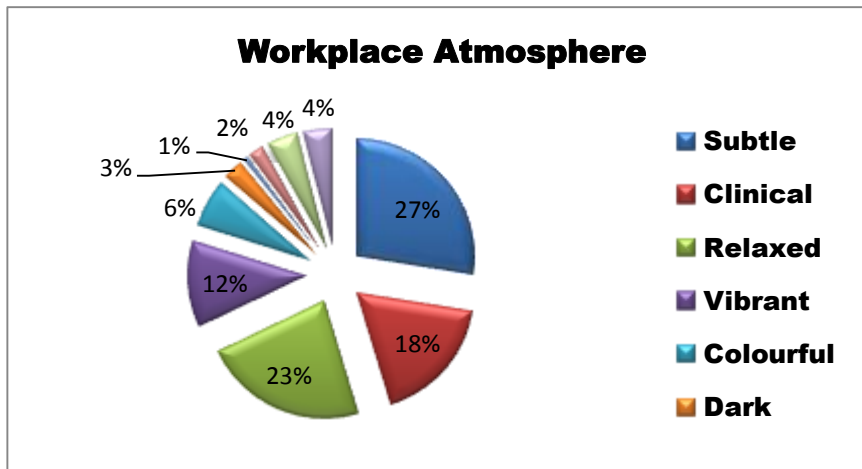


Figure 7: Office atmosphere preferences

Figure 7 illustrates the results for the respondents' choice of colour for workplace atmosphere. Workplace atmosphere is very important when the goal is to create a productive and hardworking culture in the workplace. This can contribute a lot to the creativity and productivity of the employee, which will result in higher turnover for the stakeholders in the end. The participants' preferences are as follows:

- 1% prefer dark grey colours in their office
- 6% would like to see a more colourful office
- 23% prefer to have a more relaxed atmosphere
- 27% would like subtle colouring in the office.

4.4.3 Workplace design

The workplace can be designed according to various styles. These styles vary from classic, contemporary, minimalistic and modern. The survey visually builds the participants' perfect office as they apply the different styles of their choice.

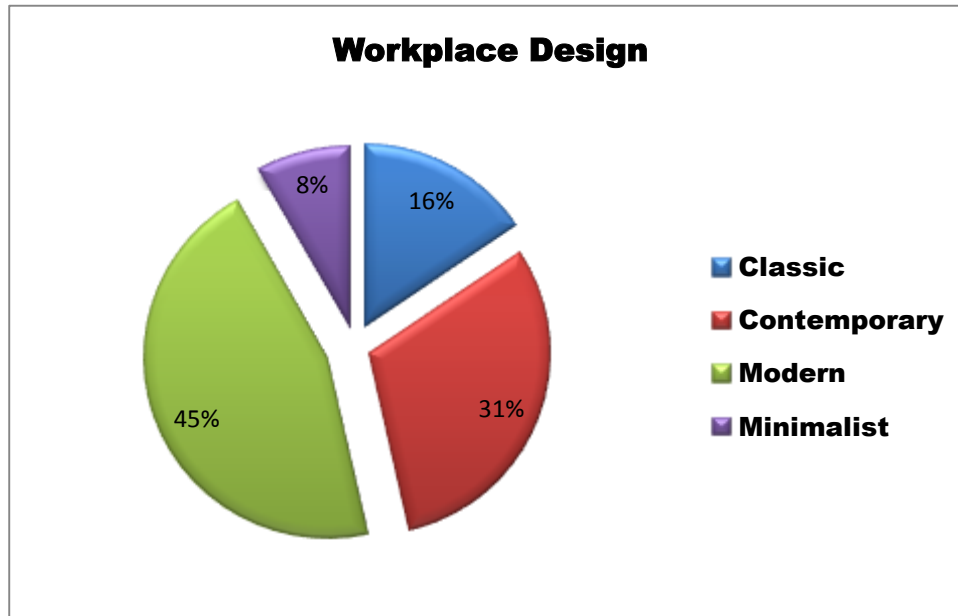


Figure 8: Office design preferences

Figure 8 above, indicates the following results for the respondents' workplace design preferences. Office design has a great impact on the atmosphere of the workplace, and will also have great impact on employees as mentioned earlier in Figure 7. The results from the participants are as follow:

- 8% of the respondents prefer a minimalistic workplace design
- 16% would like to work in a classic designed workplace
- 31% prefer a contemporary workplace design
- 45% prefer to work in a modern designed workplace.

4.4.4 Workplace technology

The technology in the workplace is one of the most important factors the respondents have pointed out when choosing an employer. The participants were asked to prioritise the technology devices they would like to have in their office. The options included a Blackberry cell phone, a personal computer, an iMac computer, an Apple Macbook Pro laptop, a printer, desk phone, and a video camera.

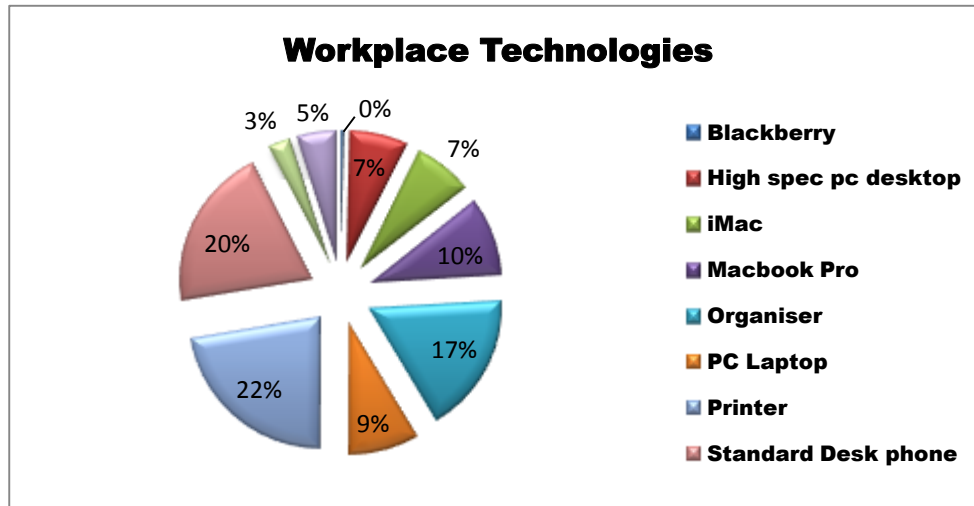


Figure 9: Office technology preferences

Figure 9 above, indicates the results for the respondents' preferences for what technology they prefer to have in their office. These technologies have a great impact on how productive the employees will be in the workplace. As already mentioned, this generation is very focused on what technology an employer can offer them and this will have a great influence on their company choice. These technology preferences indicated by the participants, are as follow:

- 3% would like to have video cameras in their workplace
- 5% prefer to have web cameras in their offices
- 7% would like an iMac computer in their office
- 7% prefer to have a desktop computer
- 9% would like a personal computer
- 10% would like to have a Macbook Pro laptop
- 17% prefer an organiser
- 20% prefer a standard desk phone
- 22% would like a printer in their office.

4.4.5 Personalise workspace

The participants were asked to indicate whether they would like to personalise their desk by either decorating it with a flower, photo or just as they prefer.

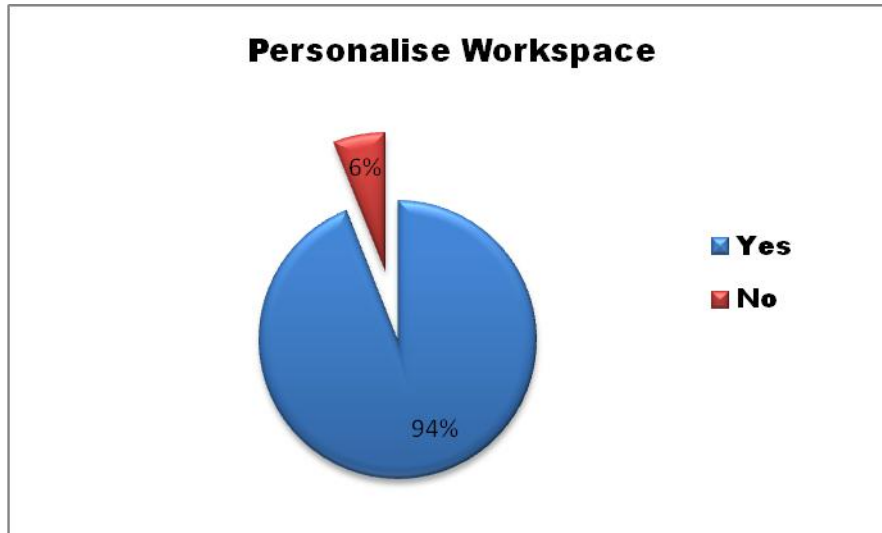


Figure 10: Desk preferences

Figure 10 above, indicates whether the respondents want to personalise their desks in their office. This is a significant characteristic of the Y-Generation, because this is a way the employee can feel “at home” in their office. They can personalise their desks by either putting a photo on the desks or some flower arrangements.

The participants’ choice to personalise their desk are as follow:

- 6% of all respondents would not like to personalize their desks
- 94% of all respondents would like to personalize their desks
- 96% of female respondents would like to personalize their desks
- 90% of male respondents would like to personalize their desks.

4.5 WORKSPACE PREFERENCES

The workspace preferences included various individual space options of how the respondent would like to work, either having his or her own desk, or sharing with a colleague. The collaborative space entails the preferences of how the respondent would like to have meetings or work on team projects. Lastly, the workspace size includes the physical space the respondent would like to have when choosing an office.

4.5.1 Individual workspace

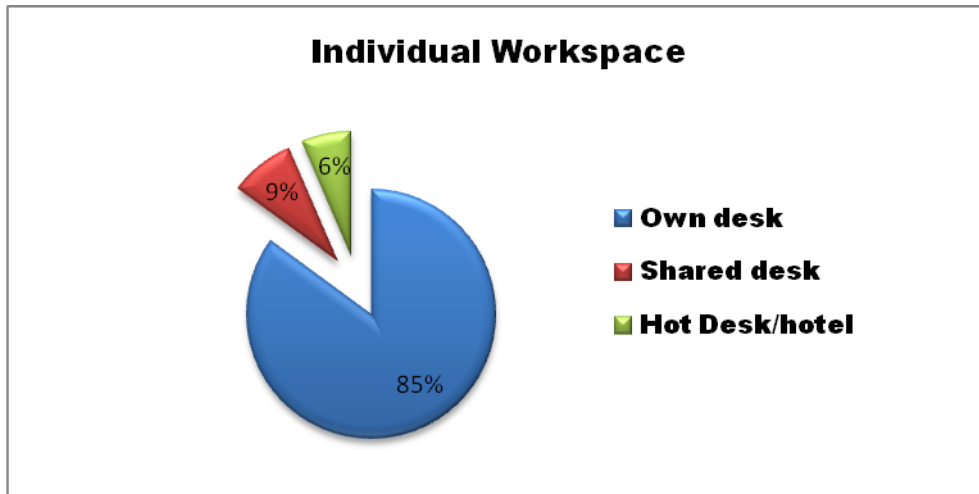


Figure 11: Individual workspace preferences

Figure 11 above, indicates the following results for the respondents' individual workspace preferences. This indicates how they would like to perform their individual tasks. The participants' individual workspace preferences are as follow:

- 9% of the respondents prefer to share their desk with someone else
- 85% prefer to have their own working desk in their office.

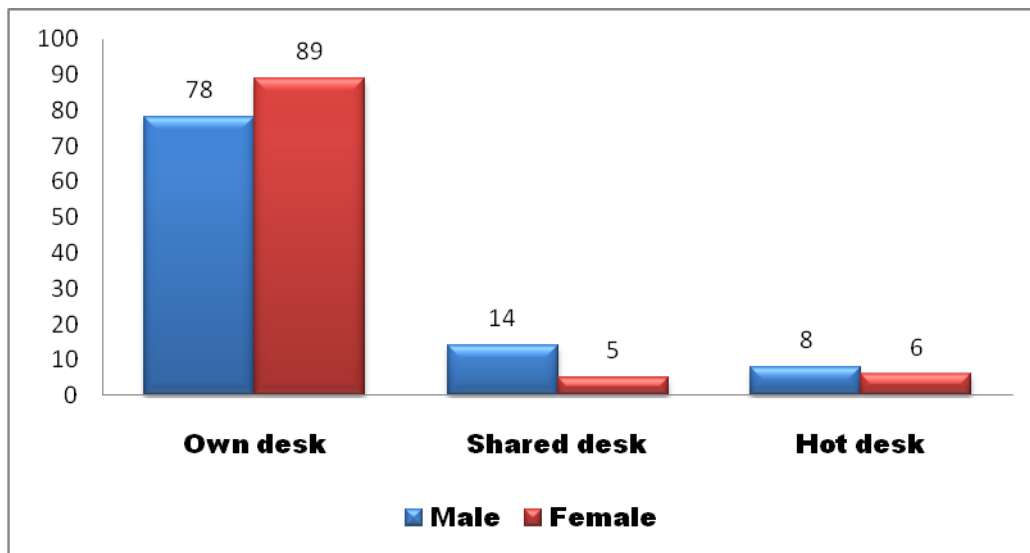


Figure 12: Male and female workspace preferences

Figure 12 indicates the workspace preferences of the different genders. It is evident that both male and female are very adamant about owning their own desks. Results show that

78% male respondents and a significant 89% of female respondents want their own desk. Whereas a small number of respondents indicated that they want to share desks with other employees, or make use of a hot desk at a hotel or other public environment.

4.5.2 Collaborative workspace

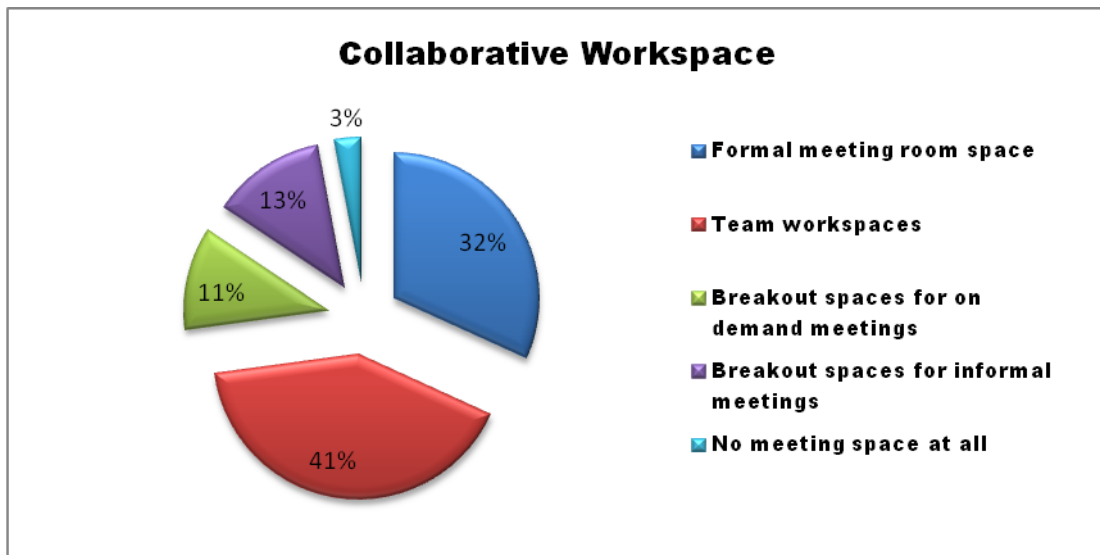


Figure 13: Collaborative workspace

Figure 13 above, indicates the results for the respondents' collaborative workspace preferences. This indicates how and where the respondents would like to work with other people, or meet with potential clients. As a characteristic, this generation is very focused on socialising and networking with peers.

The Generation Y respondents indicated that their preferences for a collaborative workspace are the following:

- A low 3% want no meeting space at all
- 11% prefer breakout spaces for on-demand meetings
- 13% respondents prefer to have breakout spaces for informal meetings
- 32% of respondents want their meetings to be in formal meeting rooms
- 41% respondents want team workspaces.

4.5.3 Workspace size

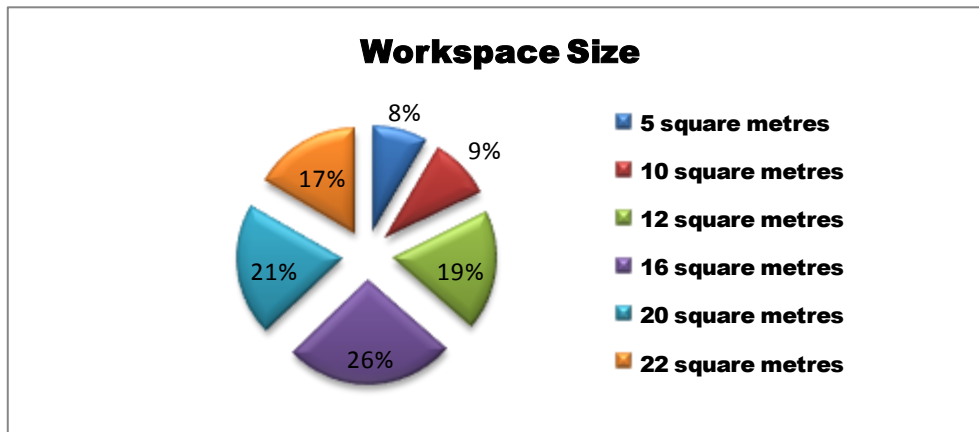


Figure 14: Workspace size preferences

Figure 14 above, indicates the results for the respondents' workspace size preferences in their office. This can be linked to the workspace atmosphere and ambiance of the office, which can also be attributes to the how productive and creative the employees are at work according to the study.

The workspace size preferences of the respondents are:

- The majority of 26% prefer medium-sized workspace of 16 square metres
- The minority of 8% prefer small workspace of 6 square metres
- 17% prefer extra large working space of 22 square metres.

4.6 WORKING PATTERNS

Working patterns refer to the way the respondent would like to work, either work in one place or a more mobile way, where he or she would have to move from one place to another. The pattern of work indicates the hours a respondent prefers to work and what is expected from him or her in their type of jobs. The hours can either be conventional, where the respondent would have to work from eight till five, therefore eight hours a day. Flexible hours entail that the respondent can choose the hours he or she would like to work a day. Ad hoc hours refer to specific time the respondent will have to work each day.

4.6.1 Way of working

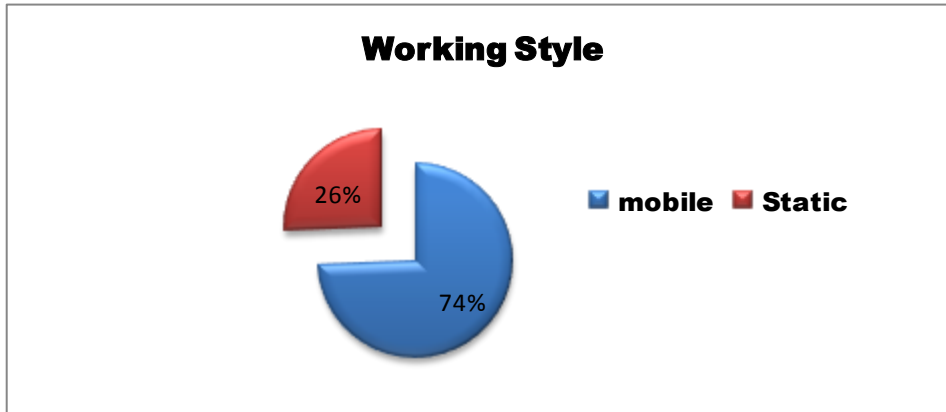


Figure 15: Way of working

Figure 15 above, indicates the results for the respondents' preference of how to work. This illustrates whether they would like to work in one place or work from place to place. Results indicates that 26% want to work more static, thus staying in one place at a time and 74% prefer to work in a more mobile way. Further results indicated that 73% of female respondents prefer to work in a mobile way in comparison with the 76% of males.

4.6.2 Patterns of work

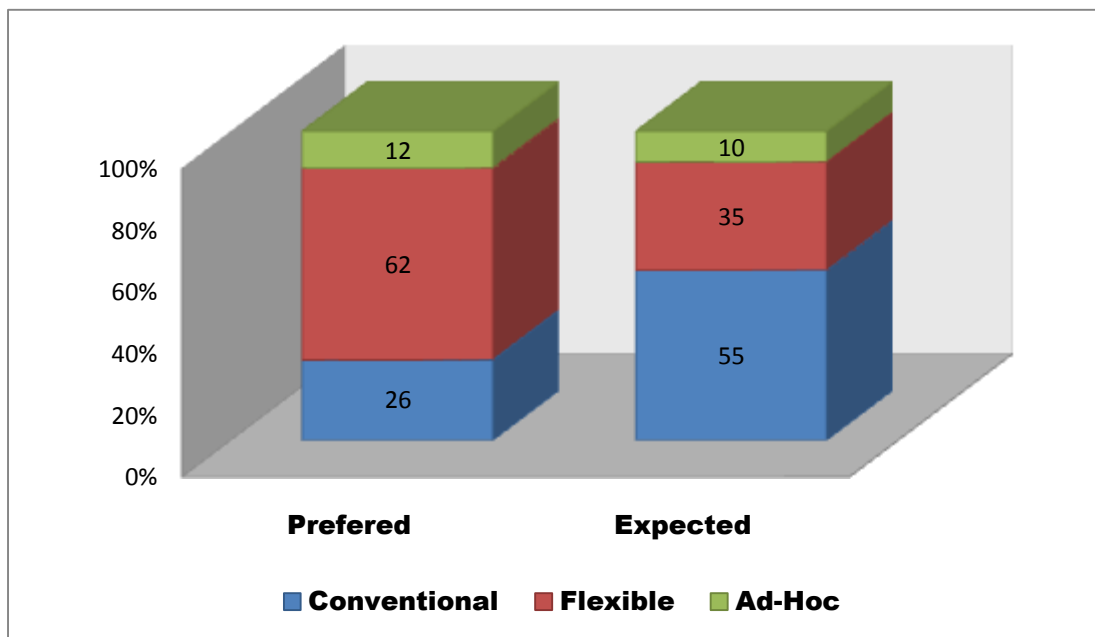


Figure 16: Pattern of work

Figure 16 indicates the results for the respondents' preferences for their pattern of work and of what is expected from them in regard to working hours:

- 26% preferred conventional hours to a 62% respondents whom preferred flexible working hours
- 55% of respondents expect to work conventional hours in comparison to the 35% whom expect to work flexible hours.
- 68% of the female respondents prefer to work flexible hours to a 18% who like to work more conventional hours
- 52% of male respondents prefer to work flexible hours and 38% want to work conventional hours.

4.7 COMMUNAL FACILITIES

The communal facilities include various food facilities and social facilities that the respondents would prefer to have in their workplace. This includes social, communal places like shops, a gym or coffee shops.

4.7.1 Social facilities

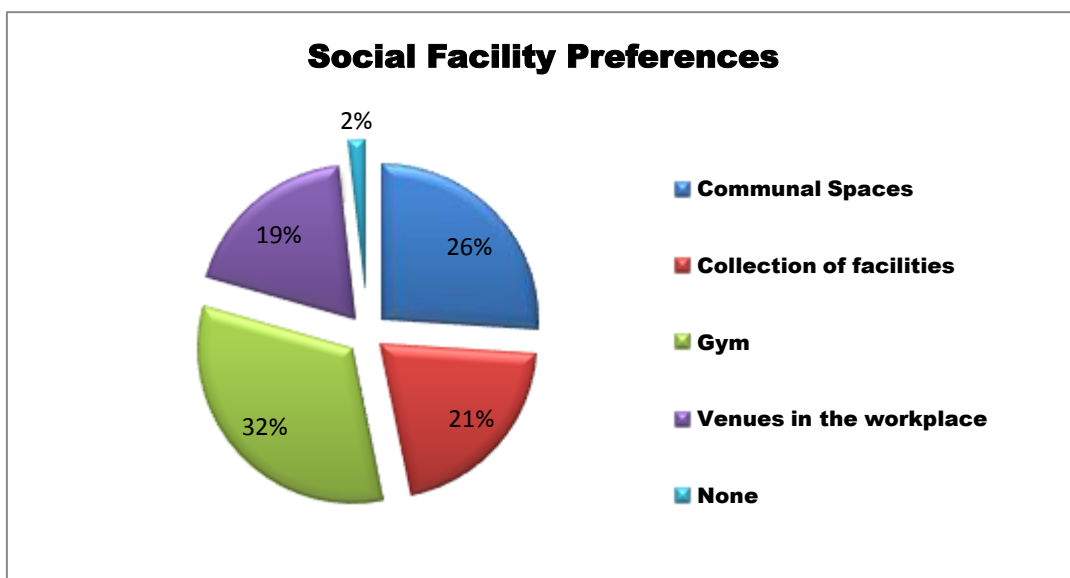


Figure 17: Social facility preferences

Figure 17 indicates the results for the respondents' preferences regarding the social facilities they would like to have near the office:

- 21% respondents prefer a collection of facilities
- 26% would like communal spaces for social interaction
- 32% prefer a gym at their workplace, whereas this statistical indicator is the same for both male and female.

4.7.2 Food facilities

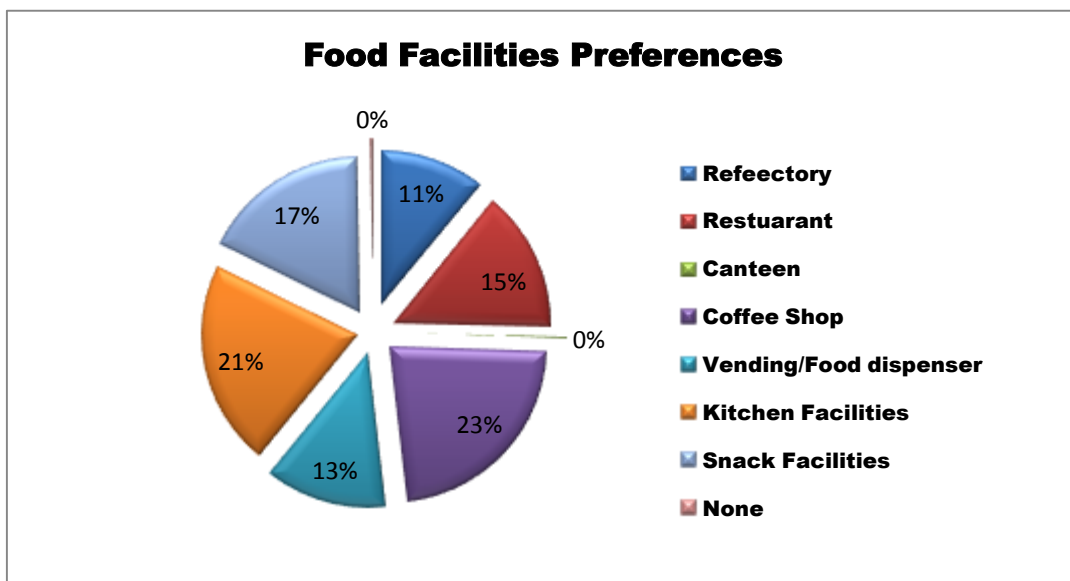


Figure 18: Food facility preferences

Figure 18 above, indicates the results of the respondents' preferences for the type of food facilities they would prefer to have at the office. The different facilities include food dispensers, kitchen facilities, coffee shops, restaurant, a snack facility, or a canteen:

- 15% prefer a restaurant at their workplace
- 17% would like to have snack facilities
- 21% would like to have kitchen facilities at work
- 23% would like to have a coffee shop where they can buy and drink coffee.

The statistics is more or less the same for both male and female, whereas both of them prefer coffee shops and kitchen facilities as their top preferences.

4.8 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The respondents' environmental awareness is questioned, where they can either be environmentally friendly, aware or unfriendly. This was indicated through questioning whether they make use, or would like to make use of recycling bins, water saving facilities, solar panels or sharing computers in the workplace.

4.8.1 Environment orientation

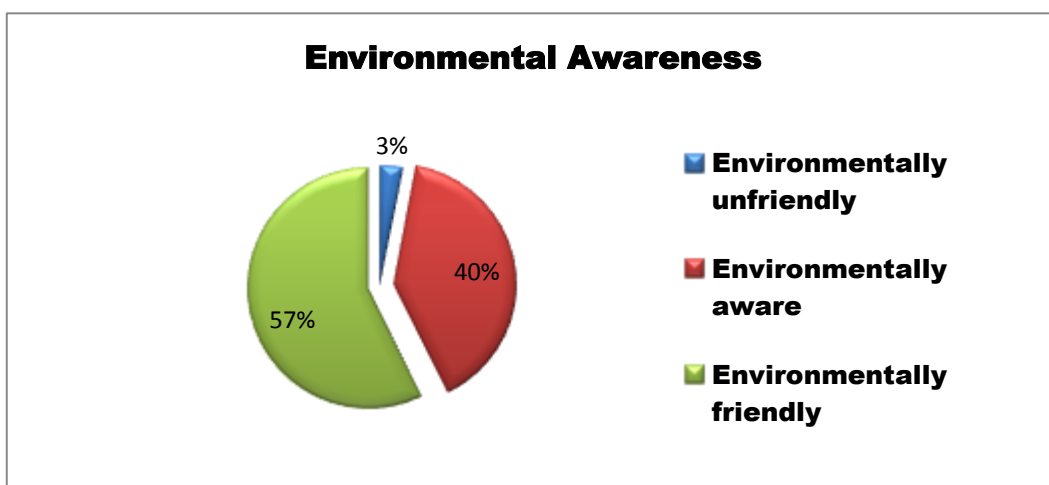


Figure 19: Environmental awareness

Figure 19 illustrates the results for the respondents' awareness towards the environment, and whether they are actively involved in saving the environment or aware of the problem at hand. A common characteristic of the Y-Generation is that they are extremely environmentally aware and want to work for an employer who will support them in this regard. The respondents' results are as follow:

- 40% of the total respondents are environmentally aware, in comparison to 57% who are environmentally friendly.
- From this statistics, 56% of male respondents are environmentally friendly to 58% of female respondents.
- 42% of males are environmentally aware to a 39% of female respondents.

4.9 COMPANY CHOICE

The results in this section indicate the first choice factors a future employee would like to have in the workplace when making a decision regarding his or her organisation.

4.9.1 Top 3 company choice factors

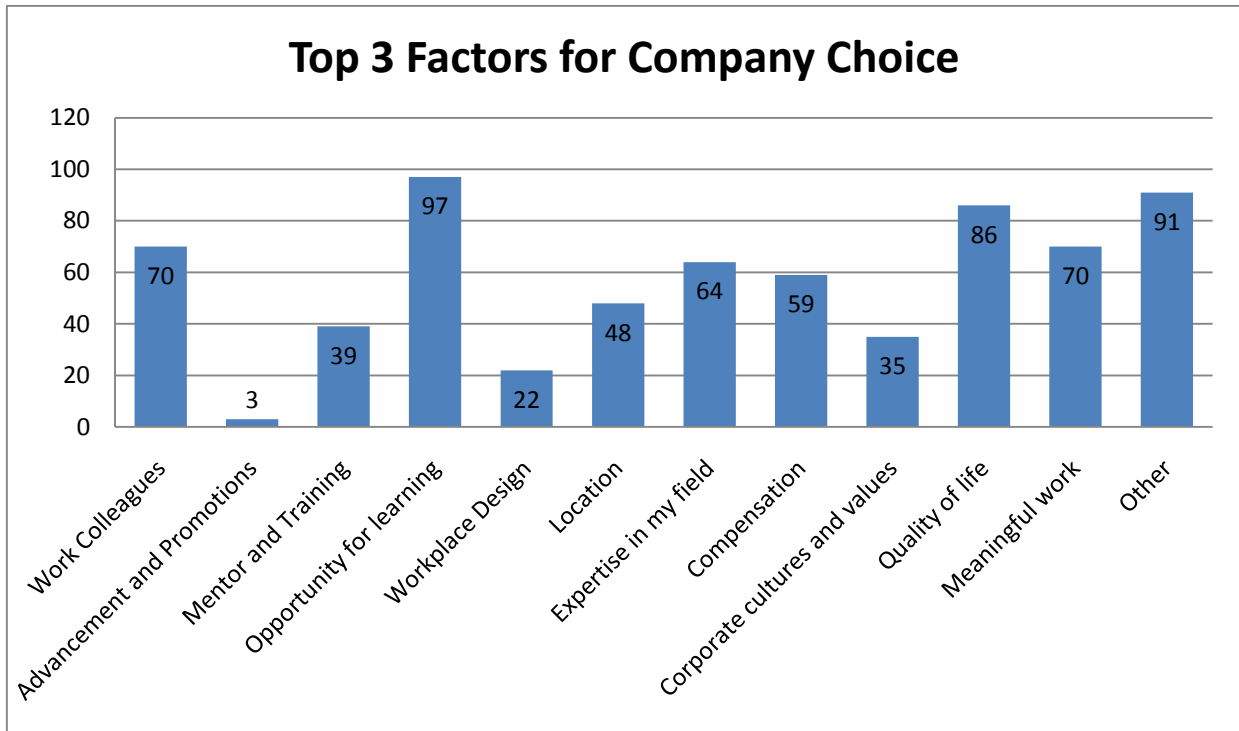


Figure 20: Top 3 company factors

Out of Figure 20 above, it is clear that the top 3 deciding factors for all the respondents' choice of company are:

- Opportunity for learning
- Quality of life
- Work colleagues and meaningful work.

In addition, the male respondents' top 3 preferences for the company they would work for is as follow:

- Work colleagues
- Opportunity for learning

- Compensation.

Female respondents' top 3 preferences for their future work include the following:

- Opportunity for learning
- Expertise in my field
- Work colleagues.

4.10 CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

The creativity and productivity factors are indicated in this category. The respondents communicate their preferences of what will contribute towards their creativity and productivity in the workplace.

4.10.1 Top 3 creativity factors

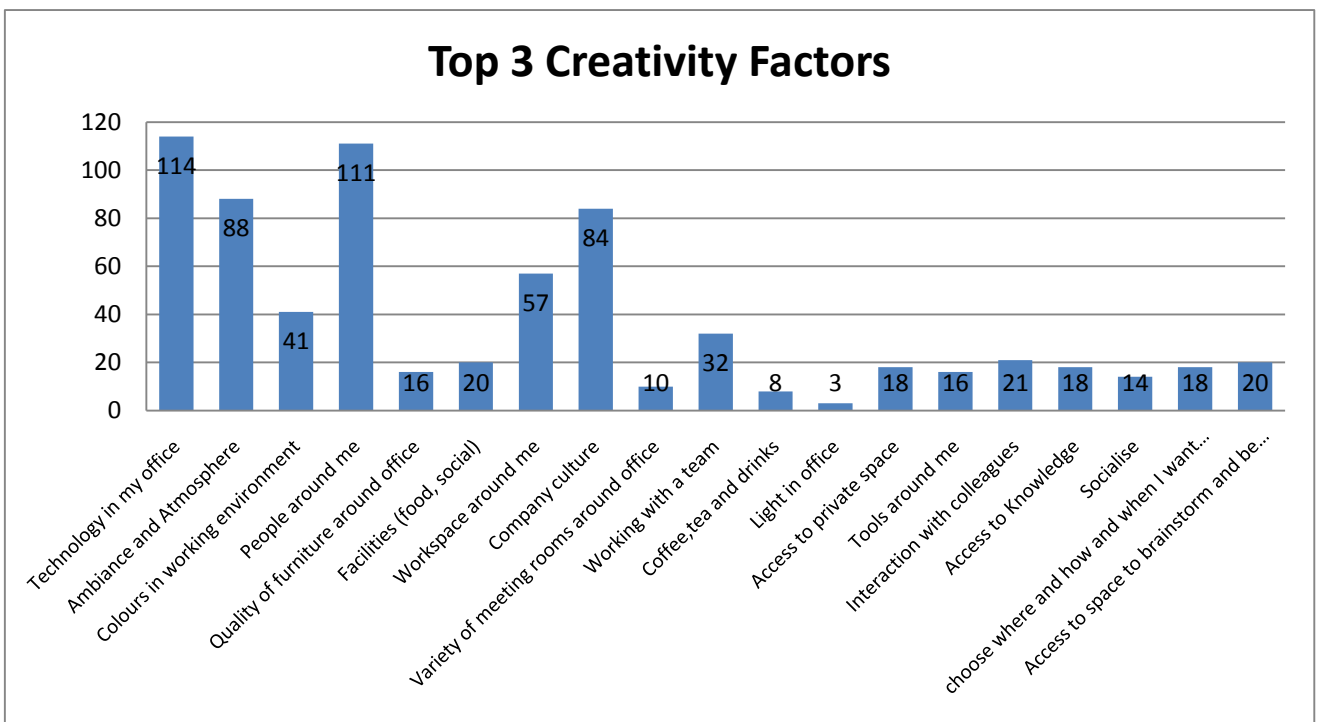


Figure 21: Top 3 Creativity factors

Figure 21 indicates that the top 3 factors that contribute towards all the respondents' creativity, as well as the male respondents', are the following:

- Technology in my office
- The people around me
- The ambiance and atmosphere
- Company culture.

The company culture is also mentioned because it is indicated to be just as important as the ambiance and atmosphere of the office.

According to the statistics for the female respondents, their top 3 creativity factors are:

- The people around me
- Technology in my office
- The ambiance and atmosphere.

4.10.2 Top 3 productivity factors

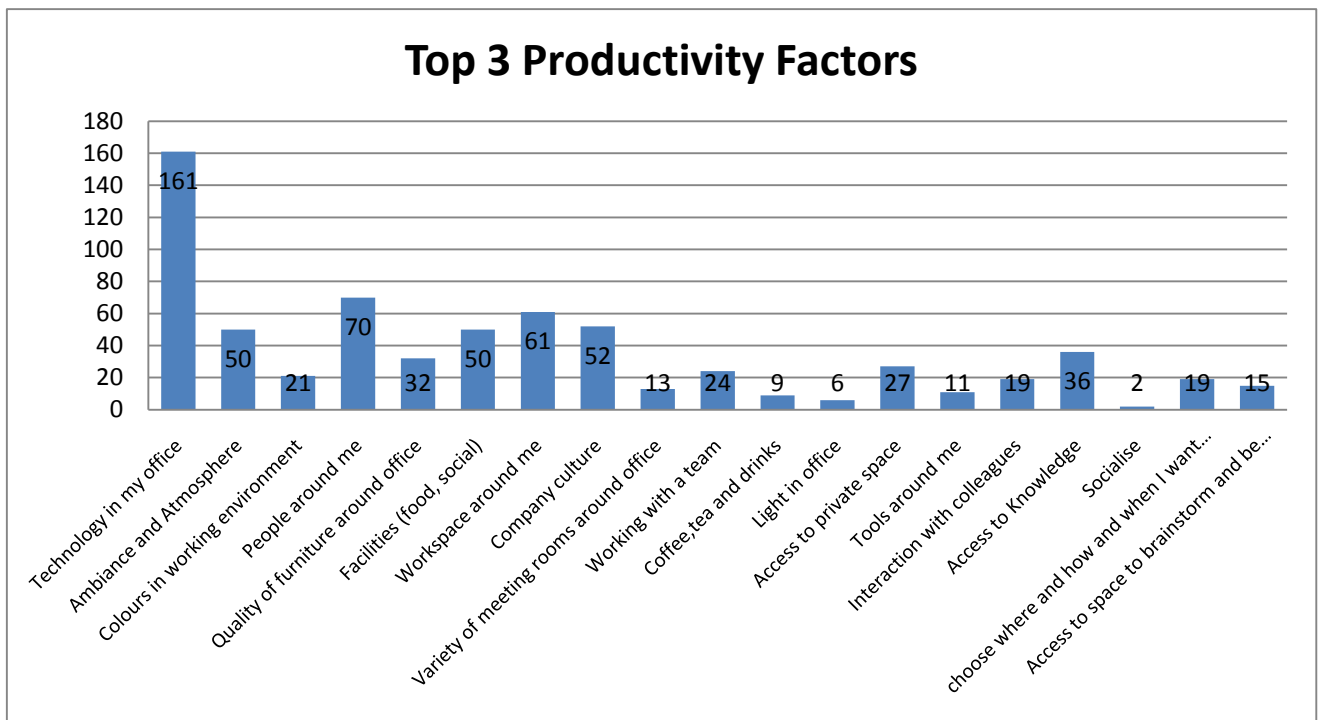


Figure 22: Top 3 Productivity factors

Figure 22 illustrates the factors that contribute towards the respondents' productivity in the workplace. According to the results, the top 3 productivity preferences are:

- Technology in my office
- The people around me
- Workspace around me.

The male and female respondents both prefer technology in their offices as their top productivity factor, whereas the women prefer the workspace around them as their second preference and thirdly the people around them. The men responded that the people around them are their second option and lastly, the company culture is a factor that influences their productivity.

As indicated by the findings, the technology in the office is an extremely important factor for this generation when contributing towards their creativity and productivity. The respondents also indicated that the people around them are very important and promote their creativity and productivity. This confirms the theory that Generation Y attaches great value to technology, because they are a techno savvy and socially orientated generation.

4.11 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results suggest in short that this generation is concerned about the way they work. This Generation chooses an employer whom can provide an opportunity for learning and a quality of life. They want to work in slightly urban location and travel to work by car and make use of public transport. Generation Y want an environment they aspire to work in, with a more subtle and relaxed atmosphere. Their pattern of work includes a mobile way of doing business with flexible hours. They want to collaborate formally in meeting rooms and as a team in dedicated team spaces. Finally, they want their employer to behave very environmentally responsible and demonstrating it in the workplace.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter summarises the findings of the study according to various categories relating to Generation Y's workplace preferences. The following chapter presents the analysis of the results for the Y-Generation sample. The different research questions will also be answered in this chapter. These research questions include, how important the workplace is in attracting, recruiting and retaining Y-Generation employees; what workspace design and technology they would like in the office; their travel preferences to work; how the workplace can contribute towards job satisfaction - and other facilities they prefer to have access to on site. Recommendations will also be given regarding attracting and retaining Generation Y employees, as well as recommendations regarding future research that can be conducted.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In a scientific examination into Y-Generation students' preferences regarding their office layout, the aim of the study was to illustrate how important the workplace is in attracting, recruiting and retaining Generation Y employees and what factors contribute towards their talent management.

5.2.1 What are Generation Y's preferences about their future workplace?

In the light of the findings, the workplace is considered critical to the Generation Y in South Africa. According to the results, 84% of the respondents consider the workplace as important to very important in attracting and retaining Generation Y employees. According to the results presented, the workplace's ambiance part and atmosphere is central to their choice in where they want to work. The ambiance and atmosphere in the workplace is partly created by the design of the workplace and partly by the interior arrangements. In

addition, this is very interesting, because this generation does not consider their workplace to be only about work, but a place to learn, and in the end contributes a great amount to their creativity and productivity. The following results support the importance of how the right working environment can contribute towards creativity and productivity, and quality of life.

These Y Generation respondents value support services in the workplace. For them, it is always pleasant to be welcomed by a smiling face at work. They want to experience high level of service delivery while in the office, as work is an important part of their live they want to enjoy. In addition, their workplace is not only a place where they work, but also a place where they can socialise. The survey results indicated that 41% of participants want 7-star service at work, therefore including a receptionist who attends to all their professional and personal needs.

Mobility is crucial to the Y Generation, whereas 74% wants this. This is not only to enhance their work life-balance, but also the fact that mobility is bringing a further dimension to work, like meeting other people, extending their social networks, and sharing and discovering new ideas. A people-to-people interaction triggers creativity, while productivity is directly linked to technology. Overall, the Y Generation students believe that, to achieve the right level of productivity and creativity, their future employer must provide the following:

- The right technology
- The right people
- The right atmosphere around them.

Location choices indicated that this generation favours a slightly urban (39%) and slightly rural (32%) location for their future workplaces. Attracting people to these locations will not be difficult for employers because 61% of the South African population is recorded to be living in an urban setting. Therefore choosing a slightly urban location is central to attracting and retaining the Y Generation employees, but a further 32% still prefers a more rural environment to work in. The top features that the respondents indicate when choosing an employer is:

- They want to work for an organisation that offers them an opportunity for learning.

- They want quality of life.
- They want to do meaningful work with work colleagues they can relate to.

5.2.2 How will they prefer to get to and from work?

The Y Generation respondents are more concerned about environmental issues at work, whereas 57% are actively environmentally friendly and 40% are aware of the environment. Amongst these participants, 67% of them would like to travel to their work by means of car, 10% would like to walk and another 10% decided that they would like to make use of public transport. In addition, the lack of suitable public transport infrastructure in South Africa is a major barrier in this regard. Amongst the 67% whom would like to travel by car, 47% indicated that they would prefer to make use of a hybrid car, which is considered to be low in carbon emissions and therefore more environmentally friendly. However, in 2010, this is not a sustainable behaviour, even in a hybrid car. It is noticeable that more respondents jump at the opportunity to invest in green technologies, like water saving facilities, sharing printers at work, and recycling. Generation Y wants their employers to be sustainable in their green compliance and not just responding to legal legislation.

5.2.3 What other facilities would they like to have onsite?

The Y Generations respondents prefer to have various food and social facilities at their workplace. The majority of respondents indicated that they want coffee shops (23%), kitchen facilities (21%), gym (33%) and other communal spaces (26%) onsite. It is important for them to have the right level of support services and access to amenities onsite. These facilities onsite would also support their work life-balance priority because it can be used as a means to socialise and network with their peers.

5.2.4 What workspace design will they prefer?

As soon as these Generation Y employees arrive at the office, they want to feel settled in by owning their own desk (85% would like their own desk) and personalising it (94% would like to personalise). However, only 8% want to share a desk and use a hot desk when they go to work. This generation is not fond of colours in the office. They would rather

prefer a more modern (45%), contemporary (31%) look with a touch of subtle (28%) and relaxed (23%) colours. A modern interior, with half artificial and half natural lighting is essential to these respondents. A minimalistic or classical design is only preferred by the minority of the respondents. The issue of space is definitely important to this generation. The majority also prefer medium-to-large sized workspace of sixteen square meters (26%) and twenty square meters (21%). Natural finishes are also a tendency for them to make their environment more inviting and open.

A collaborative initiative has started among Generation Y. Forty one percent prefer to collaborate in team workspaces and 32% of the respondents in formal meeting rooms. Networking is a high priority amongst Generation Y. They believe in the power of collective intelligence and are therefore moving in a direction to put emphasis on this concept. They want the workplace to be designed to get people together and move towards team workspaces. There is pressure amongst workplace designers to design a workplace that supports both collaborative and individual space for business purposes that will lead to increased productivity in the end.

The study results have highlighted how much the Generation Y use space differently from other generations. Regarding their work settings, it is found that the 94% of the Generation Y want to have their own desk and personalize it, which is opposite to the current movement to impose clean desk policies in office.

5.2.5 What technologies would they want to use?

Triggers of productivity and creativity are difficult to identify and often depend on qualitative issues around people at work. Technology is emphasised in this regard, whereas this factor is indicated to be most important when productivity and creativity wants to be enhanced. Secondly, the people around them at work also contribute towards their creativity and productivity.

The technology in the workplace will have a great impact on how productive the employees will be. As already mentioned, this generation is very focused on what technology an employer can offer them and this will have a great influence on their

company choice. In light of the findings, the technology devices that the participants would like to have at their workplace include an organiser to remind them of their appointments, and an Apple iMac laptop to work from when they are away from the office. They would also like to have a standard desk phone to make their work related phone calls from and a printer is expected at the workplace.

5.2.6 How important is having a choice of when and where to work?

The Generation Y is expecting more flexibility in their working patterns. There is a great demand for working flexible hours among this generation. According to the results, 62% prefer to work flexible hours, to 26% whom like to work conventional hours from eight to five. Amongst these respondents 68% women prefer to work flexible hours but 55% is expected to work conventional hours. Whereas, 52% of men respondents want to work flexible hours and 55% is expected to work more conventional hours. This difference between what the future employees are expecting and what they prefer should be addressed by the company. Human Resource Managers should consider revising current work patterns into more flexible working arrangements so that it is more visible to the Generation Y employees. Also, if the employer expects to invest in a long career within an organisation, they need to have sessions that allow the future employee to explore a clear path of advancement. Therefore, career development policies and procedures are also an important aspect of the Human Resource Management to review.

The factor of mobility is very important in the working environment and clearly the choice of portable technologies like personal computers and mobile phone means that the Generation Y can be forced into different spaces than a traditional office – using hot desks, using breakout spaces to meet and chat. The concept of collaboration is very strong amongst Generation Y. The results revealed that 41% of the 18-25 years old wants to access a team space rather than a formal/traditional meeting room. Mobility and flexibility are important in the working life of the Y Generation. Sixty two percent would prefer to have a flexible working pattern. Designing a workspace which addresses the need of Generation Y in South Africa is important in order to attract these employees and retain them in the organisation. When choosing an employer, it is all about having opportunities for learning, having a good quality of life and working with colleagues you can relate to.

5.3 CONCLUSION OF RESULTS

The purpose is not to design for one population of employees, but for several populations, including the Generation Y demanding a different workspace and working arrangements to their senior colleagues like the Silent Generation and the Baby Boomers. It is evident that Generation Y in South Africa is concerned about the way they work. They choose an employer for the learning opportunities it can offer and new offices should be mainly in slightly urban setting as a priority. This generation wants to travel to work by car as opposed to public transport as their second choice. They aspire to work in a modern or contemporary environment with subtle and clinical colours. The pattern of work they prefer is more flexibility in nature and should be offered to employees in their opinion. How they want to collaborate with co-workers and access a wide range of meeting spaces is important to them, particularly dedicated team spaces to enhance collaboration. They want an environmentally friendly organisation and expect green policies in the office, like recycling and water saving facilities.

The significance of workplace has been neglected in previous years. The present study confirms that workplace is important in attracting, recruiting and retaining future Generation Y employees. It is also confirmed that this generation values a work life balance and this can be achieved by being more mobile and flexible in their working pattern.

5.4 DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Although the study brought insights into the preferences regarding Generation Y's office layout, there are the usual limitations to the study. Some delimitations of the study included the difficultness to keep track of participants from the University of Pretoria that completed the survey and therefore they were requested to print their profiles, which also made the data collection more difficult. Facilities, like computers and the Internet, was not always accessible by participants. Participants that do not form part of the sample could have completed the survey online because there was no control over who completes the survey.

The hard core of research in this study is based on the assumptions that all participants would like to work in a corporate environment. The options that were available on the survey were desirable to the participants.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The absence of any research in the South African environment with regard to Generation Y students' perception on their workplace preferences makes this research stand out as being a cutting-edge knowledge in this domain.

Creating a flexible, dynamic and energising work environment does not require a substantial amount of capital. However, it does require an amount of risk taking and a fresh way of looking at your organisational environment. The repercussions for employers are significant and they must be responded to, or at least consider Generation Y's needs.

Design the workplace to be more flexible. The workspace is no longer static, but mobile in nature. Employees no longer want to work in one place at a time but rather be more mobile to meet with their clients and other stakeholders. While access to their own desk is a key requirement, the Y Generation wants to have more mobility in their working environment, access to community spaces and a wide range of facilities (gym, snack facilities, concierge services, coffee shops and a collection of onsite facilities). The employees want flexible work hours, not working traditional hours from eight to five. They want to balance work and social life, thus not following in their Baby Boomers parents' footsteps, where their life only revolves around work and providing for their families.

Design the workplace to be more collaborative in nature. Allowing access to a collaborative working environment is far more in demand than before, and within the same footprint, requiring a reduction of personal and dedicated space towards shared spaces, like team spaces.

Design the workplace to be more performance orientated. Creativity and productivity are the major drivers for innovation and employers must understand that their human capital

and the workspace are central to this. People and space should work in synergy to result in greater employee efficiency.

For many organisations, the goal of attracting, recruiting and retaining Generation Y employees is going to take a complete re-evaluation of how the organisation is going to maximise its human resources. Senior leaders have to establish clear policies for attracting, selecting, developing, evaluating, and promoting Generation Y, which in return needs to be communicated to all levels of the organisation. In order to get the senior leaders on board with a rigorous effort to attract Generation Y, a connection should be made between the organisation's ability to increase turnover and the presence of new, younger employees. Organisations should have a look at their vision, mission and values as potential factors in attracting the Y Generation. This generation would like to feel that the work they do contribute towards the greater good of society.

A Generation Y-friendly environment is a multigenerational-friendly environment. Time should be spent to create such an environment. Tension among the generations will continue to cause increased loss of revenue.

The Senior Management and Human Resource partnership should consider workplace policies that can provide employees with a lot of flexibility while maintaining a productive structure. To gain a solid perspective on a company's work culture or personality, an employer can distribute an organisational survey. This can be done effectively by relying upon the cooperation of both management and employees, and even the feedback of employees and suppliers can be considered.

Generation Y employees need continuous feedback from their managers or supervisors. This fulfils their need to deliver what their managers want, because they are perceived to be motivated and driven. The idea of giving constant feedback may seem exhausting or unnecessary to the common manager, but it is exactly what the Y-Generation say they need. Taking the time to give more feedback keeps the employees striving to do their best for the company and provides the information Generation Y needs for personal development (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009).

Other challenges according to Oxygenz include:

- Keeping up to the rapid technological growth and not falling behind.
- Transforming workplaces which allow for individual work and collaborative tasks.
- Providing an environmentally green workplace – not only into its design, but also in the way employees work.

5.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research may explore the preferences of Generation Y according to their race, industry sectors and geographical area. This study only focuses on the Y Generation at the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, and therefore lacks input from a different geographical area, which results in the lack of response from different cultures, backgrounds and occupation.

This study only focused on the Y-Generation, and therefore lacks input from different generations. A further opportunity for research can focus on whether there are significant differences between different generations regarding their workplace preferences.

5.7 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the results and conclusions of this empirical study. It also addresses a number of recommendations that can be considered by future employers to sustain attracting, recruiting and retaining of Generation Y employees. In the final section, recommendations were made on future studies that can be pursued.

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APPENDIX A
- Informed consent form -



Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Dept. of Human Resource Management

OXYGENZ – THE INFLUENCE OF THE Y-GENERATION ON OFFICE LAYOUT

Research conducted by:

Prof Karel Stanz

Cell: 082 559 6672

Miss. J.S. Kruger (25337433)

Cell: 082 848 7471

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Jacoba Susanna Kruger, a Masters student from the Department of Human resource Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to **determine the influence of the Y-generation on office layout**

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous interview. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to me. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions as complete and honest as possible. This should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my supervisor, Prof Karel Stanz at 012 420 3074, if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Respondent's signature

Date

Faculty: Economic and Management Sciences
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
0001

July 2009

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: LETTER OF CONSENT: PROPOSED RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA FOR OXYGENS: THE INFLUENCE OF THE Y-GENERATION ON OFFICE LAYOUT

The Faculty: Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria herewith consents to the proposed research, at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of the research will be to **determine the influence of the Y-generation on office layout**. The University of Pretoria acknowledges that the proposed research relates to an academic research study and will consist of a Survey Questionnaire that will be completed on a voluntary basis by students enrolled at the University of Pretoria.

The Faculty: Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria grants authorization for the use of the above information for this purpose, with the full understanding that this will not be to the detriment of the University.

Should any additional information be required in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact **Prof. Karel Stanz** on the following numbers:

Office: 012 4203074

Cell: 082 5596672

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX B


- Application for ethical clearance -

APPROVAL OF APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

RESEARCHER/APPLICANT:

I, as researcher/applicant undertake to **archive the research data** for a minimum **period of ten (10) years**.

Name in capital letters:KAREL J STANZ.....

Signature:..... Date:21 July 2009.....

STUDY SUPERVISOR:

I am of the opinion that the proposed research project is ethically acceptable

Ethical implications None No ethical implications Yes

Name in capital letters:

Signature: Date:

CHAIR: DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Name in capital letters:

Signature: Date:

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:

Name in capital letters:KAREL J STANZ

Signature:..... Date:

CHAIR: FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Name in capital letters:

Signature: Date:

14. CHECKLIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- Research proposal
- Introductory letter from researcher to respondents (on a UP letterhead) explaining purpose of research.
- Permission from relevant authorities granting permission that research may be conducted.
- Informed consent from human subjects to take part in the research
OR
- Questionnaire, with tick box where respondents indicate their informed consent to participate
- Interview schedule
- Other, *please specify*.